

# Open Research Online

---

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

## Peer Mentoring And Professional Development: A Study Of EFL Teaching In The Middle East

### Thesis

#### How to cite:

Toner, Sean Vincent (2004). Peer Mentoring And Professional Development: A Study Of EFL Teaching In The Middle East. EdD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2004 The Author



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000c08f>

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk)

Sean Vincent Toner

M7259368

**Peer Mentoring and Professional  
Development: A Study of EFL  
Teaching In The Middle East**

Doctor of Education (Ed.D)

2004

# Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my wife, Vasiliki, and our three boys for their patience over the years of research.

Special thanks go to Fiodhna and Padraig Hyland for proofreading, formatting, and for many hours of support.

I am also grateful to Malcolm who did the computer troubleshooting, and to the Kuwait Postgraduate Study Group who showed interest and lent books.

My supervisor, Dr. Sally Heaney, was a great support, helpful and encouraging.

# Contents

## **Chapter One – Context, Research Settings and Rationale**

Context	1
Setting 1: IPETQ	1
Centre Differences and Overall Management of IPETQ	2
The Naval College	4
The Military College	6
Widening Research within IPETQ	7
Joint Command and Staff College	8
Qatar Street	9
Setting 2: The British Council RSA CELTA Course	10
Setting 3: The International School	13
Comparisons between the Facilitation of Professional Development in the Three Locations	15
The Rationale.	16
Action Research Aims	19
Reflections Upon Focus For The Research	20
Hypothesis	22
Wider Relevance of the Research	22

## **Chapter Two - Conceptual Framework and Literature Review**

Concepts	28
What Is Mentoring?	28
To Sum Up on Mentoring	41
Continuous Professional Development	42
Teacher Collaboration as a Strategy for Handling Change	49
Research Questions	55

## **Chapter Three - Research Methodology**

The Ethnographic Approach	58
Teacher / Supervisor As Inside Researcher	60
Action Research	63
Grounded Theory	65
Validity And Reliability	67
Ethical Considerations	69



Generalizability	73
Instruments Of Research	75
<b>Chapter Four –Findings and Interpretation</b>	
Part 1: Research Tools	78
Part 2: Early responses from supervisors, teachers and students	79
a. IPETQ Supervisor Responses	79
b. The Questionnaire for Teachers	81
c. Student Outcomes	84
d. The RSA CELTA EFL Teacher Training Course	85
e. The International School	87
Evaluation of Early Research	89
Part 3: Analysis of the Six Research Questions	91
Question 1:To what extent does peer mentoring affect the learning of teachers?	91
Question 2:To what extent does peer mentoring affect subject knowledge?	107
Question 3: How does peer mentoring affect the quality of teaching?	115
Question 4: How does peer mentoring affect curriculum development and building?	120
Question 5: How does peer mentoring affect the way teachers respond to change?	132
Question 6: How do peer mentoring trials affect the role of teachers in EFL institutions?	138
Overview of Research Findings	145
<b>Chapter 5 Discussion of Outcomes and Implications for Further Research</b>	
Evaluating the defining elements of the Kuwaiti centres	147
The Middle East context evaluated	150
The importance of the research for the wider educational world	151
Evaluation of the qualitative approach to the research	158
Evaluation of findings in relation to the literature	160
Use of internet for peer mentoring	166
Possible future applications of research	167
Implications for further research	171

# List of Tables

## Chapter One – Context, Research Settings and Rationale

Table 1.1 Describing the four settings within IPETQ Mindef Contract	4
---	---

## Chapter Three - Research Methodology

Table 3.1 The differences in research traditions	66
--	----

## Chapter Four –Findings and Interpretation

Table 4.1 Research tools affecting research questions	78
Table 4.2 Responses to IPETQ supervisor questionnaires	79
Table 4.3 Interpretation of IPETQ supervisor responses	80
Table 4.4 Analysis of six responses to RSA teacher questionnaire	86
Table 4.5 Differences in ethos and management 2001 – 2002	92
Table 4.6 Table indicating peer mentoring at each of the six sites	93
Table 4.7 Development of International School curriculum change	130

# List of Figures

## Chapter One – Context, Research Settings and Rationale

Figure 1.1: The IPETQ organization structure	2
Figure 1.2: The three research settings, research roles and significant factors within each setting	15



# Glossary of Terms

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPE	Continuous Professional Education
DIALOGIC	To do with a mentoring experience that allows for open ended learning
E830	The module for the Open University MA Ed course which is specifically dedicated to <i>mentoring</i> .
E835	The Open University module in Research Methodology, a necessary precursor to Part B of the Doctorate in Education
Ed.D	Doctorate in Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language. (Normally used to indicate the teaching of General English)
ELS	English Language Services. The American based company that was the parent company on this contract till October 2001. This company was in charge of the English Language component of Kuwait Ministry of Defence teaching contract when I was carrying out mentoring research at the Naval School from 1997 – 2000
ESP	English for Specific Purposes (Eg For Aircraft Maintenance / Military Training/ Banking etc)
GROUP MENTORING:	A group of people, usually the teaching team in this context who engage in collaborative work to improve the quality of curriculum or teaching.
IPETQ	Merger of two companies - Independent Private Education and TecQuipment, both British - led companies. Succeeded ELS in 2000 managing MINDEF EFL teaching at four sites.
LATE – ENTRANT’	A person who was in other walk(s) of life before retraining for EFL teaching The usual route is via Cambridge RSA Celta course (can be taken at British Council centres throughout the world). Some late entrants will later attempt a Diploma (RSA Delta).

LIFELONG TEACHER	A person whose only career has been and is in teaching. Teachers in this bracket usually have qualifications like PGCE/ B.Ed. In America they would be BA.Ed or BS.Ed. They are normally state - recognised or have Qualified Teacher status.
LIVING CURRICULUM	A curriculum which is constantly open to change and is informed by teachers' practice.
MENTORING DYAD:	Two people engaged in collaborative work which could be viewed as peer mentoring
MONOLOGIC	To do with mentoring that expects a particular outcome
IPETQ/MINDEF	The Military School of Languages for the Ministry of Defence. The proper title for the overall teaching concern. In practice rarely used. People more usually refer to the four sites which are: Military College, Joint Command and Staff College, The Naval College and Qatar Street.
NS	Native speaking teachers of EFL
NNS	Non –native speaking teachers of EFL
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education. One year University School of Education teacher training. Most EFL/ESP teachers who have done this course will have specialized in Modern languages or EFL
RSA CELTA	Royal Society of Arts. Certificate in English Language Teaching for Adults (The Trinity Cert TESOL is similar) One month full time: three month part time.
RSA DELTA	Royal Society of Arts. Diploma in English Language Teaching for Adults. Six months part time.



# Abstract

This Middle East - based study enquires how peer mentoring might enhance professional development of EFL teachers and affect student learning.

Research covering 1999 to 2003 developed my initial peer mentoring initiatives of 1997 and 1998. I adjusted to various professional roles within three settings. I was supervisor of EFL training, from 1997 to 2001, observer of an RSA Celta teacher training course at the British Council, from February to April 2001 ( interacting between September 2001 and May 2003 with some course participants in their first EFL jobs) and from 2001 onward teacher/coordinator of Social Studies in an English – medium international school attempting curriculum change. Mentoring roles varied accordingly.

The action research is interventionist and the methodology leans heavily on the ethnographical approach which contains thick description and analysis of questionnaires, interviews, constructed pro-formas and diary notes. As an insider researcher in the three settings, I have been able to follow closely a process of peer mentoring trials.

Highlights of the results are that interactive work that draws on the total experience of the teaching staff of an institution can lead to new implementations in the EFL/ESP classroom and in curriculum development; that ‘traditional’ mentoring can lead to a ‘monologic’ process rather than open dialogic learning; that defined curricula, hierarchical management structures and teachers’ own natural defensive attitudes create a climate of non-responsiveness to change. Management does not draw on the total experience of teachers. Students, however, seem to value a perceived collaborative stance by teaching staff .

.

Peer mentoring appears to shift the emphasis from a defined body of subject knowledge and one specific training to skill sharing in the workplace and to balancing pedagogic knowledge with subject knowledge and combining

strengths offered by non – native - speaking and native - speaking teachers. Peers can also benefit through interactive use of the internet.

The research suggests that international schools and EFL institutions become more responsive to the latent dynamism that exists within their staff and that they hire trained peer mentoring facilitators to promote effective collaboration.



# Chapter One

## Context, research settings and rationale

### Context

This research was carried out in Kuwait in three English Language training organisations; the training organisation IPETQ, the British Council and an international school. In the first establishment both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in this instance for military purposes, was taught to adults. This establishment comprised four separate centres and provided four respective sources of data. In the second setting EFL teachers were trained and EFL was taught to both children and adults. In the international school, English was the language of instruction and EFL was a major requirement for all, mainly Kuwaiti, students that ranged from Kindergarten up to 18 years of age.

### Setting 1. IPETQ

IPETQ is a British joint venture training company comprising of IPE (Independent Private Education) and TQ (TecQuipment). IPE is owned jointly by Kuwaiti and British shareholders and TQ, a Nottingham based company, provides technical equipment and training to Turkey, the Middle East and the Far East.

IPE and TQ joined together in 1998 to operate training for a number of institutions within Kuwait. In September 2000, IPETQ won the contract to deliver English Language training to four major colleges and schools operated by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defence (Cf Figure 1) and known as the MINDEF contract.

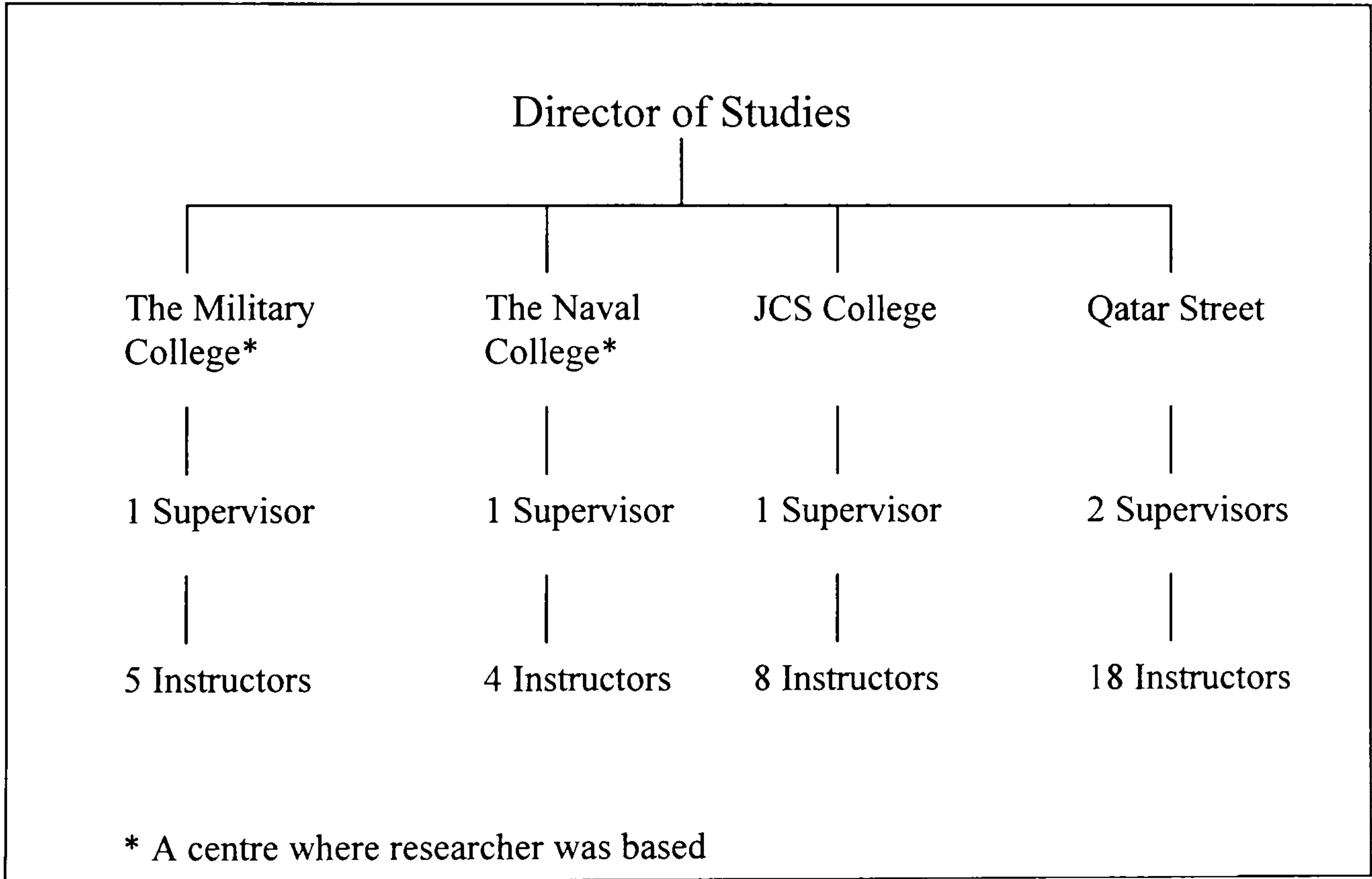
For three years previously the contract had been administered by English Language Services (ELS), an American - based company with franchises world - wide. The present research began when ELS had the contract and continued when IPETQ administered the four centres. I worked in the capacity of supervisor of instructors for both companies and at two sites, the Naval School from 1997 to 2000 and The Military College from 2000 to

2001. The remit at both these colleges was to teach general English (EFL) from lower – intermediate to advanced level to groups of mixed ability. There was also a requirement to build into the course English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in this case for military purposes.

Whilst studying for the Open University MA. Ed. and for the Doctorate in Education I introduced and trialled mentoring activities, both mentor-mentee and peer – to - peer mentoring for curriculum development, lesson planning and delivery, at both the above sites. My role was that of an insider researcher carrying out ongoing action research. I also had respondents from the other two sites, The Joint Command and Staff College and Qatar Street where I had constant access.

**Figure 1. The IPETQ Organisation Structure**

Each centre within IPETQ MINDEF had at least one supervisor and a number of instructors.



**Centre differences and overall management of IPETQ**

IPETQ upper management, on the evidence of its communications, memos and its dealings with staff appeared to be strongly bureaucratic in approach. The style of management seemed to be hierarchical. A general manager controlled the MINDEF section of the company. Also there was a range of



managers controlling all the company's varied interests of which MINDEF was but one. Administration could be problematic since the General Administration Manager requested completion of a great deal of paperwork (connected to ISO 9000 quality office procedures) and the Director of Studies/Mindef also required the same papers.

Supervisors reported to the Director of Studies, their own Colonel in charge of the site, the Training Manager, the Administration Manager and the ISO Quality Manager. Rules were imposed on professionals apparently without any requested input from those professionals. An entry in my Research Diary (March 10 2001) records a comment from Jim, one of my respondents: 'There seem to be too many chiefs and not enough Indians in this company' and then again: 'Too much paperwork. Have they nothing to do?' (March 12 2001).

The emphasis put on administrative issues, for example the filing of forms at the expense of improving quality teaching, is one of the factors that seemed to indicate a bureaucratic approach to management

Early research, for a Master's degree module on Mentoring and for a project within a course on Research Methodology, had illuminated differences in curriculum and training aims between the four schools and colleges (Cf Table 1.1). The backgrounds of the supervisors at each site were also varied and this fact had implications for the type of management at each site. Certain supervisors, in replies to questionnaires, announced themselves as hierarchical in approach to teachers and achievement of goals, others appeared to regard themselves as facilitators. This resulted in certain types of teachers preferring to be in certain centres. The different management styles are discussed further under research findings in Chapter 4 and evaluated in the context of the total research findings in Chapter 5.

**Table 1.1 Comparison between IPETQ sites**

Naval College	Military College	Joint Command and Staff College	Qatar Street
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time divided: writing new curriculum (in conjunction with naval officers) and teaching small classes. 15-20 Ss per group</li> <li>• Fairly unpredictable environment</li> <li>• Small group of teachers/ 3-4 normally at site</li> <li>• Collaborate mainly in creation of materials</li> <li>• Supervisor advocates informal collaboration</li> <li>• All 4 teachers favour this site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time divided between creating and revising curriculum and delivering it to very large groups of young officer cadets (18-21yrs).</li> <li>• Highly unpredictable environment</li> <li>• Largest problem lies in size of classes which reflect platoon sizes(50-60)</li> <li>• Supervisor is the researcher and encourages peer-mentoring</li> <li>• 4 from 5 teachers favour site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested and varied work in a predictable environment</li> <li>• Create own curriculum</li> <li>• Teaching mature high level officers. 5-8 Ss in class</li> <li>• Most instructors collaborate on all assignments</li> <li>• Supervisor advises instructors to collaborate on testing and curriculum revision</li> <li>• All 8 Teachers favour this site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescriptive Curriculum. Highly predictable environment</li> <li>• 30 books of American Language Course provided</li> <li>• 12-15 Ss * in class</li> <li>• Two weekly tests decide if Ss move on. Therefore test driven.</li> <li>• Supervisors (2) support the type of curriculum.</li> <li>• 18 Teachers are split. 10 dislike it. 8 others support it since it is easy- non thinking. Little input required.</li> </ul> <p>*Ss = Students</p>

### **The Naval College**

This research was initiated at the Naval College where small groups of young recruits were taught the *English for Basic Seamen* course which was written by myself and my team in 1998. ESP courses such as *English for Navigation* and *English for Naval Communication* were occasionally taught. The writing of these courses began when I was supervising EFL teachers at this site and were still under revision by the team between 2000 and 2002.



At this site my aim was also to carry out trials which involved co - analysis of lessons, focused class observation by peers, and by myself as a mentoring facilitator, and feedback between teachers and between teachers and myself. There was also peer cooperation in curriculum development and in translating good classroom practice into curriculum. The transferability of different skills and experience also began to interest me.

Four teacher respondents (from four approached), despite some early opposition, had, after some exposure to peer mentoring, written a very positive evaluation of co-analysis of lesson plan and collaboration in class delivery. These sessions had been followed by feedback and discussion with other teachers and myself.

A questionnaire I gave students at the Naval College during early trials in 1998 had shown that, in comparison with normal lessons, certain lessons which had involved co-analysis in planning and collaboration in delivery produced very positive responses. The four teachers and myself, the facilitator or mentor, met together and analysed individual lesson plans. I was invited to observe the lessons and to focus on particular aspects of them and then post lesson analysis would follow. Gradually, the teachers began to co – analyse and observe each others’ work without my intervention. The positive student response, together with a conviction arising from these pilot trials that ‘late-entrants’ to EFL / ESP had much to offer to team practice, provided further stimulus for investigation of organised peer-mentoring techniques.

I left this site in 2000. The new supervisor at the Naval College, in response to questionnaire and interview in 2000, indicated a positive stance toward creating a climate of cooperation and collaborative work but, like two of the other four supervisors, he suggested that informal and non- directed or minimally - guided collaboration worked best.



I approached, in 2002, the one remaining instructor I had worked with from 1997 to 2000 and who had participated in mentoring trials for E830, the Open University's MA module for Mentoring. The instructor responded to questionnaire and indicated that he was working with three instructors new to the college of which two were new to Kuwait and to a military environment. There followed an attempt to broaden response to questionnaires and the *working pro-forma* (See Appendix 3B) which had been issued to all four sites. I requested my contact in the Naval College to encourage the new teachers to respond. As the level of student was generally lower at the Naval College than in other sites I was especially interested to know how teachers might cooperate to enthuse low - level language learners.

### **The Military College**

From January 2000 to June 2001, whilst I was supervising five to six teachers at the Military College, I became aware of the need to regularly meet with teachers and encourage them to peer mentor each other in order to meet the constantly changing circumstances which were the hallmark of that particular centre. I was particularly interested, for research purposes, to have a non - cooperative member of staff at this site. It was here that I attempted to reduce my mentoring presence and encourage independent peer mentoring. Also, it was here that I began to realize the importance of continuous facilitation. When I returned in 2003 to check whether peer mentoring was still operating I noticed that, although there was some continued interaction involving pairs of teachers helping each other, much of the dynamism had gone.

Within the Military College a number of factors (outlined below) caused the environment to be constantly changing and this demanded total flexibility from the team and close collaboration between its members..

- Instructors taught large groups (up to sixty in a class) of male officer cadets a mixture of elementary, intermediate and upper intermediate level general English. Some English for Specific Purposes (military ranks, equipment etc) was also taught



- The syllabus and the curriculum were, in 2000, created solely by the teaching team without direction from the client (the military) or the upper management of IPETQ
- In 2003, the syllabus changed from an eighteen month course to a three year course. IPETQ management tried to impose the prescriptive American Language Course (ALC) curriculum in use at Qatar Street but the Colonel in Chief directed the instructors to create new materials.
- English was one of several subjects taught at the College. All other subjects were taught in Arabic. English was not viewed as directly supporting the other main military subjects. Hence the department felt some confusion as to its role.
- Seven hundred students were taught each week. They were split into platoons which consisted of students with varied English language ability ranging from complete beginner to advanced. Streaming was not permitted for military and operational reasons
- There was originally no specific target score for a student to aim for over his eighteen month course. In 2003, however, a new three year course was introduced leading to a Bachelor of Military Science
- A different timetable for each week. This was revealed only a few days before the teaching began
- Classes and / or their location could be changed suddenly and without warning
- Students were seventeen to eighteen years old and, for cultural reasons, generally had a poor attitude to learning.

It is at the above site where I, the insider researcher, could readily observe the mentoring interaction that I encouraged and where, as supervisor in 2000, I had the largest percentage of respondents to my research (four out of five instructors at this site).

### **Widening the research within IPETQ**

In 1999 I had first opened the pilot research, in the form of a needs analysis, to the wider institution. Six respondents (from 32 teachers at 4 different sites within the institution, at that time managed by ELS) saw positive



advantages in collaborative work although four out of six saw this as informal sharing by teachers outside of any formal framework.

In 2000, to broaden the field of research to encompass one of my action aims, which was to attempt to initiate an institution – wide peer mentoring strategy (Cf: page 19), I sought out more respondents between 1999 and 2003 in all IPETQ centres. From 2000 to 2003 some of my initial respondents left the company and other newcomers agreed to respond. In short, I always had respondents in all the IPETQ centres.

I introduced a schema for action research to the supervisor at the Joint Command and Staff College and his staff and asked four respondents to feed back to me through questionnaire, group discussion and individual interview. At Qatar St. people responded through questionnaire or in interview after work when I could speak to them. For purposes of research I was glad to find that Qatar St. provided contrast with other centres and that each of the four centers had a different emphasis. Teachers' attitudes towards curricular development became a central consideration as I began to tie in curriculum with quality of teaching and quality interaction between teachers.

### **The Joint Command and Staff College**

At the Joint Command and Staff College (the JCSC) the students were senior officers, brigadiers, colonels and majors in the Kuwait Armed Forces who worked with senior British officers and Egyptian advisors and an international body of students (Russians, Chinese and others), in order to create an international consensus on modern military practice. The classes were small but expectations were high. The emphasis was on creating and delivering a very good English for Specific Purpose curriculum, as the level of general English was already quite high, and it was expected that most instructors would confer on planning, curriculum development and testing. There had never been an official mentoring policy in place, however, and certain individuals preferred to create and teach their own specialist materials without conferring. Collaborative work was carried out on an



informal basis at daily breaks or during breaks in the training. No structured peer planning or peer feedback system was in place until I requested four people in 2001 to involve themselves in actively collaborating with each other and feeding back in group meetings which I would facilitate and attend.

Two strong respondents at that site initially showed interest in the goals of the research and, in questionnaire responses, indicated a dedication to collaborative ideals which fitted in with the conceptual framework behind these peer mentoring trials. They were working in a team of eight English Language instructors under a supervisor who also indicated, in questionnaire responses, a commitment to collaborative planning and reflection. As research progressed two others at this centre opened themselves to the research by asking to be allowed to fill in the pro-formas that I had created in order to assess the kind of collaborative work, if any, being carried out at the four centres. These forms and the follow – up interviews constituted a form of needs analysis. More will be reported on initial attitudes to collaboration in the section of the dissertation which deals with findings from the research and their interpretation (Cf: Chapter Four p.79-80).

### **Qatar Street**

At Qatar Street two supervisors managed eighteen teachers and classes consisted of twelve to sixteen students. These were normally basic recruits who attempted to rise through the military system by following the American Language Course (ALC). This syllabus consisted of thirty books which prepared a student for a final exam. The accepted pass rate in the final exam, in order to go on courses in England or America, was 70 %. At each stage, every two weeks, there was a test on the book the student was presently studying. A student could not progress to the next book without attaining a pass. The course was, therefore, test –driven.

The instructors taught six lessons a day to the same group for a two week period and, in earlier responses to questionnaires and interviews carried out in 1998, they generally stated that they did not have time to collaborate in



any effective way with colleagues. The test and the type of curriculum, prescriptive and imposed from outside with minimal or no input by the instructor, dominated the training ethos at this centre. Despite this, certain instructors with a wide range of backgrounds responded. Some were novices in the sense of being new to a Kuwaiti cultural and ethnic milieu, others were familiar with both the culture and the ALC.

.  
Each of the above sites provided a unique environment for the research into peer-mentoring techniques. By keeping respondents at each site over four years I was able to obtain long term insights into their theoretical viewpoints and their practical approach to teaching EFL and ESP. These respondents tried out collaborative techniques, providing them with an opportunity to reflect on their praxis and on theory into action as they involved themselves in limited peer mentoring.

### **Setting two. The British Council RSA Celta Course**

The second setting for the research was the British Council RSA Celta (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) course that ran in Kuwait from January to April 2001. Many of the trainers at IPETQ and at the international school who had previously worked outside of teaching had entered onto the first rung of EFL teaching via the RSA Celta. On the other hand, the traditionally - trained teachers had mainly taken PGCE or MA routes into teaching which had been, especially twenty or thirty years ago, less practical and more theoretical in essence.

I carried out evening observation, as a *fly on the wall* and collected post course judgments and opinions from eight of the fourteen participants. In 2001 and 2002 I followed certain of these newly qualified EFL teachers into their workplaces. The focus on these different occasions was the possible link between a training which claimed to incorporate peer observation and collaborative techniques and actual first teaching experience. In this way I hoped to examine a continuum of how peer mentoring translates from training into practice.



The course participants were from a variety of backgrounds and experience. Nine were native speakers, five were non - native speakers. Four participants had, recently, been employed outside of teaching, six were housewives or were out of work. Six from the fourteen had been in some kind of teaching before and were retraining. Hence, I was interested, in the light of the research questions at the basis of this dissertation and which are outlined at the end of Chapter Two (Cf: p. 55):

- to establish how far the former experiences of participants was utilized.
- to find out what peer mentoring skills, if any, are developed on this course
- to observe how well non - native speakers coped with the course
- to establish whether there were links between this training and the readiness of newly qualified teachers to use collaborative strategies within the actual practice of EFL teaching.

Permission was granted for me to attend and observe, with the proviso that I would not interfere in any way with the course or even ask for opinions from participants on any aspect of the course whilst it was in progress. The role of silent observer, in fact, helped me to retain a healthy distance between researcher and respondents in a situation which could become tense and emotive, particularly since the practical sessions I attended were being assessed by the two trainers who had the power to pass or fail the participants.

The peer coaching approach was inherent in every aspect of this course. From week one (of a fourteen week course) student teachers were encouraged to learn from their colleagues and to utilize every possible experience or insight they offered. Groupings allowed trainees to get to know each other and also they, usually, facilitated collaboration.

Teachers at first planned and taught lessons in groups of seven, sharing a two - hour lesson by taking it in turns to present an aspect of English Language. When one was teaching the other six would observe with a view to presenting feedback later. Groups were eventually reduced, three sharing



one hour with focused observation by the trainers (with a view to assessment) and by peers (with a view to improving performance by constructive critique). Toward the end of the course each teacher was expected to deliver one - hour lessons, alone. Hence, gradually, the trainee was expected to take on more teaching time but at all times that teaching was peer -observed and peer -critiqued. The varied activities appeared to point to the notion of the *experiential learning cycle* which is discussed under conceptual and literature frameworks, in Chapter 2, p.32, of this dissertation, with particular reference to Kolb (1984).

In the first few weeks the two trainers led input sessions on subjects such as phonology and error correction, on certain days, and on other days the same trainers split the fourteen participants into two groups of seven for purposes of guided planning of classes which would then be team - taught during the next session. In the teaching practice sessions, trainee teachers would present a different angle or method for fifteen minutes then hand over to the next trainee. Whilst one trainee was being practically assessed by the RSA trainer the other six trainees would watch with a view to presenting critique during a later feedback session. This feedback was presented by the trainers as a valuable learning strategy. Sometimes various trainees could be asked by a peer to focus in on a particular technical aspect of teaching, eg. *Teacher Talking Time*. Later the observers' critique would be shared during peer feedback time.

I was able to attend eight times in all. In any one evening I was observing an input session (eg. The tutor demonstrating approaches to error correction) then the planning of a class by groups of trainees (using information from that input), or perhaps a 'team teach' followed by feedback and reflection. I attempted to determine if there had been progression as the course developed. I centred on three to four of the eight respondents (as the timetable allowed) so that I could attempt to follow any progression but always from a distance and without communication between us. Two of those selected for *distance observation* had varied backgrounds outside of teaching and two were teachers at schools in Kuwait who wished now to



branch into EFL. Two of those were non – native speakers. The sample is representative of one of the aims of the research which is to examine how a broad band of experiences can be utilized to improve teaching. At the end of the course, on April 11 2001, I approached the respondents for more details on how they felt the course had benefited them. Eight people replied to a questionnaire and offered follow up interviews.

Two respondents also indicated that I could follow them into their first EFL jobs where I hoped to evaluate how their training in collaborative practice informed their actual practice. I was able from 2001 to 2003 to visit these two teachers and to correspond with and interview two others who remained as teachers at the British Council as teachers of Young Learners. Of the first two who were observed, one, who was a non - native speaker of English, went to an International Indian School using English as the lingua franca for teaching. The second, a native speaker went to the same aspiring international school as I went to in November 2001 and, for the short time she remained there, we were colleagues. Any research results which centre around these four respondents will be reported under British Council in the Findings and Interpretation section and in the Discussion and Implications section, Chapters Four and Five, respectively, of this dissertation.

### **Setting three. The International School**

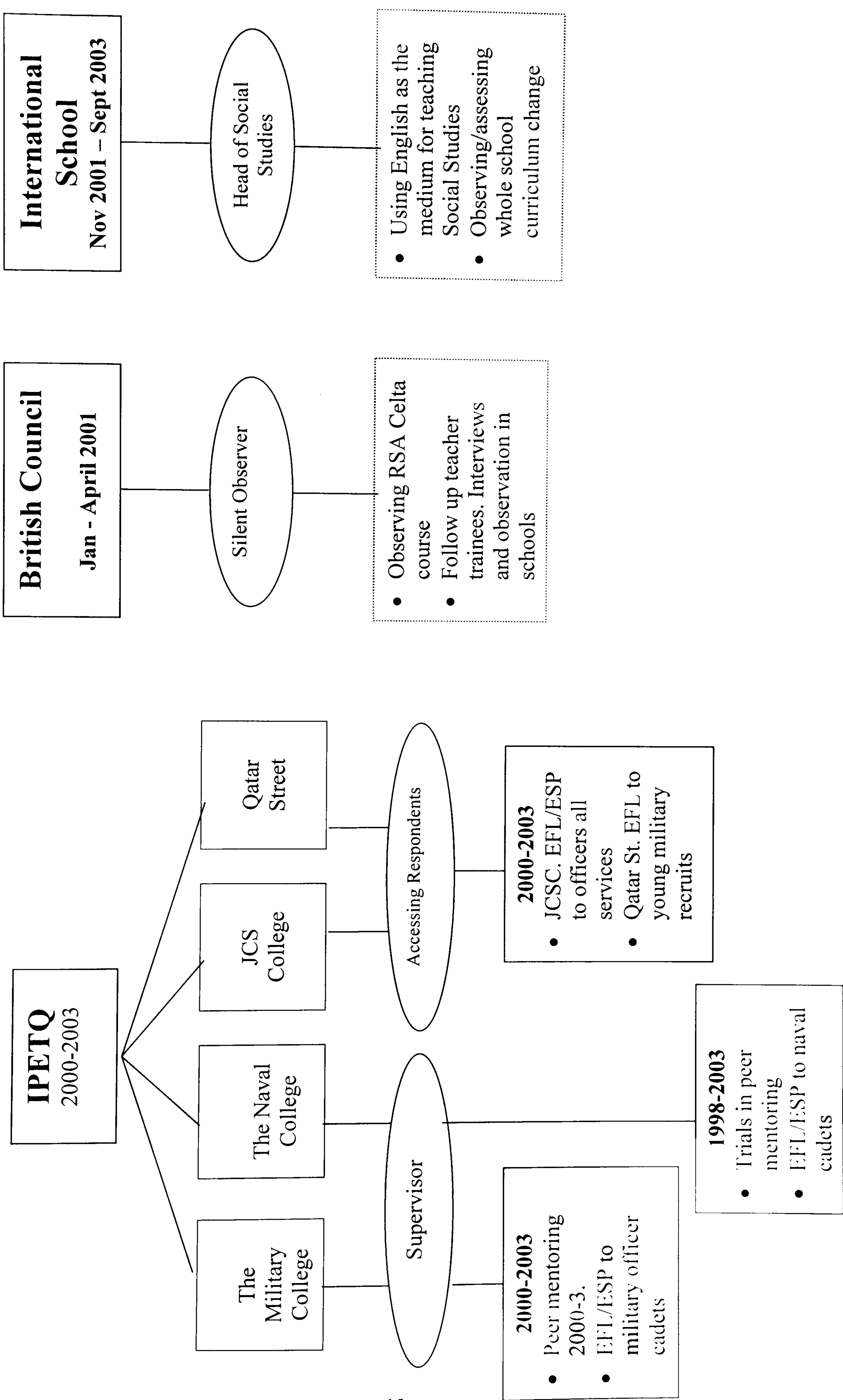
In November 2001 I joined the international school where a whole school curriculum change was being carried out. I was eager to examine whether or not this would affect teacher learning through collaborative work, teacher unity and morale within the school and quality of teaching and of student learning. This change in personal direction offered another dimension to the examination of peer mentoring since it allowed me to go back into the classroom and therefore experience, first hand, teaching older adolescents in an international school setting in Kuwait. The school was owned and managed by Kuwaitis, with only Kuwaiti students in the senior years. The curriculum was to be changed and adapted in all subjects to attract accreditation by an American State Board of Education, since most subjects were taught through the medium of English. I was appointed as teacher of

American Social Studies and, because I taught the four senior classes in the school, I was designated subject leader. Although all school subjects, except for Maths, Arabic and Religion, were taught in English, the general standard of English throughout the school was low.

I was also interested to know whether discipline, accepted as a major problem area by managers and teachers at the time when I joined, might improve with the expected implementation, from September 2002, of a new curriculum created by the staff themselves.



Figure 1.2 The three research settings, research roles and significant factors within each setting



## **Comparisons between facilitation of Professional Development in the three locations**

The three settings provided the ground where the concepts and theories behind this research could be examined and where the practice of peer mentoring and collaborative strategies ‘in action’ could be monitored. They provided a comparison between a teacher training centre (which also provided English courses for the Kuwaiti public) that insisted on collaborative techniques in its training and in its regular teaching programmes, an institution where trials were being introduced and no top down policy of peer coaching existed, and a school that was asking its teachers to write up new curricula in order to gain accreditation by an American educational body.

IPETQ’s view of facilitating teacher development was restricted to offering courses at their local head office in teachers’ free time. Very few employees chose to attend. The International school provided, for a select few, the opportunity to attend international conferences. It did not encourage teacher collaboration, peer observation or feedback. This type of ‘development’ coincides with what Eraut (1994) calls Continuous Professional Education (CPE). This research, however, focuses on what the same author refers to as Continuous Professional Development, which envelopes outside courses *and* more importantly for this research, *workplace-based learning*.

### **The Rationale.**

The rationale for this particular study was formulated in 1998, then adjusted over the ensuing five years in the light of reflection. The main factors affecting the rationale are considered below.

- **The globalization of the English Language** as a result of recent worldwide economic and political trends has created an all time demand for instruction in English Language. This demand cannot be met by traditionally trained teachers from University or College departments of Education. There are not enough of these teachers to cover the job market in their home countries. Moreover many prefer to look for



longer - term security in their own countries. Also, not all of these graduate teachers have a qualification to teach Modern Foreign Languages which traditionally was a prerequisite for teaching English as a Foreign Language and involved learning a specialist methodology

- **A new type of entrant to the profession of EFL/ESP teaching has arisen in response to the market demand.** Often this kind of teacher is a person experienced in other walks of life who comes into EFL as a career shift or in order to travel as he/she works. The notion of a truly 'portable' career tempts many. By 'portable' I mean that EFL/ESP teachers can use their skills in almost every country in the world and that opportunities exist that allow a teacher to move easily from one job to the other
- **The death of the idea of 'the job for life'** in the western economies has made it easier for people to shift career
- **Qualifications** such as the RSA Celta provide rapid access to the EFL world by placing teachers on the first rung of the ladder to an international career. Despite the fact that there are not enough Language graduates in teaching to cover domestic markets in the West, many diverse university qualifications are offered as more people enter tertiary institutions and these institutions compete. It is therefore common to find a whole range of qualifications in an international EFL/ESP institution such as IPETQ. The international character of the teaching body also makes it difficult for recruiters to evaluate a wide range of qualifications. Criteria for recruitment are now difficult to establish as qualifications vary. Some are more academic than practical and vice-versa
- **Learning is seen as a continuum** throughout life and notions of *how* we learn are the subject of considerable research (Cf: p.27).

All the above factors indicate the importance of a unifying factor such as the company advocating a policy of Continuous Professional Development whereby all teachers share their diverse skills within a peer mentoring and collaborative environment. In this way, whatever the starting point of the teacher, the company knows that organisational and personal growth are



encouraged and that the likelihood is that the teacher who is learning and is valued as a member of a team will want to contribute to the company's goals.

The move in western teacher education toward a more practical training via mentoring in schools form a basis for my thinking in this direction. Kelly et al (1995) lead the whole notion of mentoring toward staff development for all levels of teaching and emphasize the 'learning' element involving 'changes of behaviour' (Kelly et al 1995, p253-254). The authors cite as good practice that the whole school or organization 'calls on its stored expertise and experience' (Kelly et al 1995, p.254). This sharing of experience coupled with the notion of an experiential learning cycle such as Kolb (1984) developed, is at the heart of the hypothesis that guides this research. The clear message arriving from such research is that teachers through reflection in action and active experimentation and collaboration can enhance their own learning and that of their students.

The practice of making use of all of the skills available requires a knowledge of strategies which might effect the transmission and transfer of such skills and aptitudes. An explanation of how I view mentoring strategies, particularly the more recent notions of peer mentoring, as the vehicle for such transfer of skills is presented in the Concepts and Literature section of this dissertation (Cf: p.33).

As the research developed I grew stronger in the belief that the focusing on collaboration by peer mentoring trials created real learning opportunities and offered real possibilities for teacher development. A wealth of different skills and aptitudes which had not emanated directly from teacher training were being shared and were clearly enhancing curriculum development and enlivening pedagogical approaches.

It became very clear to me, at that time, that peer mentoring, through co - analysis and collaborative work, is an organised approach, involving the Kolb (1984 ) learning cycle of action and reflection whereas informal



sharing, for example during coffee break, is a less focused activity.

Schon's (1987) insights into reflective practice for professionals, now seen as vital to the learning process, also provided a reason for selecting peer mentoring as the main strategy for continuous professional development. This form of mentoring lends itself on a daily basis to reflective practice and those participating in it can be called reflective practitioners.

### **Action Research Aims**

Apart from the above rationale this research was undertaken out of a strong conviction which has grown through reflection on twenty nine years of modern language teaching and management in Great Britain, West Africa, Cyprus and the Middle East. My conviction that the wider experience of EFL teachers, taken from inside and outside of their pedagogical training, is not utilised effectively to create dynamic teaching, led to the formulation of action aims which needed to be tested and analysed. These general aims were generated by a desire to examine how EFL teachers and trainers collaborate, how the collective experience of teachers and supervisors is utilized by management and how new EFL teachers are trained in collaborative techniques such as peer mentoring.

#### **The broad aims of the research were:**

- to improve the quality of teaching and learning within IPETQ/MINDEF and an international school
- to create an institution-wide peer mentoring base within IPETQ and a chosen international school
- to investigate the correlation between teacher training and teacher approaches to teaching and learning
- to create conditions within which wide experience of life can be utilised to benefit teachers, students and the institution as a whole.

## Reflections upon focus for the research

The focus of the research changed in the light of reflection upon the actual skills and attitudes that EFL teachers claimed, in their responses to ongoing enquiry. A provisional research title referred to ‘skills, sub-skills and attitudes that EFL teachers bring from other walks of life to teaching.’ Teacher-respondents, however, pointed out how difficult it was to pinpoint where and when exact skills or positive attitudes were acquired and that it was even more difficult, for example, as the Research Diary for 2 April 2001 reflects, to assess: ‘where and when might a teacher have developed a virtue like calmness when under pressure?’

There were marked examples of where an EFL teacher may have been utilizing a skill wholly learned in another profession. However, most teachers indicated they would feel more comfortable if they were permitted to look at all of their experience, teaching, travel, cultural exposure, social upbringing and education, when trying to locate a transferable skill or attitude in order to reply to questionnaires. I, therefore, decided to focus on *experience* covering all of a teacher’s former learning and *transferable skills* which could allude to any strengths that the respondents themselves, or myself as observer or facilitator, remarked upon as having positive impact on team learning.

The language used for interaction with respondents, particularly the clear explanation of what I meant by *experience* that is brought to teaching, was constantly under examination. The thirty six teachers that made up the IPETQ / MINDEF project under examination and, more particularly, the sample group of twelve, were not an *experientially* homogenous group, except in the sense that they were all EFL teachers. The peer mentoring, once trials were initiated, provided the vehicle for dynamic interaction. Likewise the fourteen participants on the RSA Celta course, more particularly the eight respondents, had disparate backgrounds and qualifications. The International School had teachers from five different nationalities with very different qualifications and experience.



Since there was such disparity in background and qualifications, my research began to lean toward utilization of *all* previous experience to create collaborating teams and to evaluate the degree of cooperation and collaborative sharing of skills between teachers and trainers.

Ongoing reflection led also to a focus on *sharing* of skills and the total experience of EFL teachers. The collaborative approach in teaching is the subject of a good deal of action research by teachers. It is also linked to educational policies in UK and North America which, as Bridges (1995) and others point out, have, since the 1980s, encouraged a move toward *teachers training teachers* via mentoring and other in-school training.

Utilizing skills is not the same as utilizing the *sharing* of these skills for team professional development. Marshall (1995) discusses the *collaborative workplace* and points out that working together is not the same as effective collaboration. He suggests that real collaboration arises from a shared vision and that it is a process based on principles which produce trust and integrity. This trust involves a shift away from systems based on power and control to one based on the principle of collaboration. My research, therefore, began to question how teachers are managed and led and to what extent collaborative learning can impact upon teaching and curriculum development within volatile and constantly changing environments such as I witnessed at the Military College and the International School.

Importantly, too I enlarged my research interests to include *improved student learning* as one of the goals of the peer mentoring trials, since I hoped that the research results would point to a link between improved teacher learning through peer mentoring techniques and student learning.

As an insider researcher involved in action research, I found, even in the early pilot study that the underlying questions were always under examination. The defined research questions, however, would need to be informed by the concepts and literature which are the subject of Chapter Two.



Given that there were so many complex areas to investigate, however, I decided that the title of the research, for purposes of clarity and easy comprehension, could be kept simple. I decided that the key phrases which were Peer Mentoring and Professional Development, in an EFL and Middle East context, would constitute the title itself but that other related areas of focus would be dealt with in the literature and in the results. Central to the research, however, would be a strong hypothesis.

### **Hypothesis**

The central hypothesis of this research is that the many and varied skills that international EFL teachers have and continue to hone as they move around the world should be better utilized by management and by themselves. The sharing of these skills through peer mentoring and collaborative work will create dynamic and responsive teams which will in turn have a positive impact on student learning.

### **Wider relevance of the research**

Following limited success in early trials at improving morale, communication and learning between teachers of many various backgrounds and experiences, I became interested, as an additional focus, in the transferability of experience of those who had entered EFL/ESP teaching later in life and I opened the research into different settings to attempt to access more teachers with varied experience. Such experience had been gained in many parts of the world and I wished to compare and contrast how such international experience benefits teacher learning

I realized also that insights into English as a medium for instruction in an International School might well be relevant to the global dimensions of EFL in the modern world.

Furthermore the portability of the EFL career means that the flexible teacher who gains peer mentoring experience in Kuwait this year may well be

passing on that experience next year to others in areas of the world like China. Often working under conditions which are alien to western ideas and given that working abroad has always provided a cultural challenge, the flexible teacher must be ready for change, including change of job. Responding to changing environments is a central theme that will be examined in the research literature section in Chapter Two (Cf. p.49)

The three settings for my research opened up possibilities for comparison and contrast within this research which can be outlined below:

- My own presence in three settings and my own job changes could be seen as representative of the average EFL teacher's changing lifestyle and provide interlinkable experiences which lead to a comparative study. An example might be that the effect of peer mentoring on curriculum development or on strategies used for effective teaching of English for Specific Purposes can be compared from the small team approach in the MOD centres to the whole school approach in the international school.

My own mentoring roles changed over four to five years so as to provide me with extra insights into the challenges of being:

- a mentor and facilitator at the Naval School, Kuwait
- a peer mentor and facilitator at the Military College and three other MOD sites
- a mentee and a peer mentor at the International School.

The differing positions allowed me to play the role of inside researcher from a number of different vantage points. More than one type of reader of the research will be able to associate with findings perceived and analyzed from more than one point of view. Most people interested in mentoring would also, I feel, like to read about comparative elements of the three settings and my different roles.

This changing of mentor role is in keeping with Perry's (2000) view that: 'mentoring as a process is not only dynamic but also complex.' (Perry 2000 p242) The same author reports how mentoring roles change when the staff



of a school in Australia abandon the University associate who had been their mentor in favour of peer mentoring. Roles appear to be ever changing in what is heralded in the article as a successful programme of teacher learning.

The three settings provided a model of the three main arenas within which English as a Foreign Language activity can be witnessed globally. It was hoped that peer mentoring could be seen to affect the quality of teacher learning and learning opportunities in

- an EFL teacher training institution
- a specialist training unit where English for Specific Purposes is taught
- an international school using English as a medium for the teaching of all main subjects

I was able to work within my different roles with teachers, trainers and trainers of teachers who were both native speakers of English and non - native speakers. The particular needs of non –native speakers and their level of contribution to dynamic team work begged certain questions concerning possible future developments in training teachers because, increasingly, non - native speakers will be doing the bulk of English language teaching as English becomes increasingly in demand worldwide.

It is, therefore, with some confidence of discovering useful data that I continued the research into all three settings. I was also able to access the three settings and to stay in touch with respondents at all research sites. The nature of the study meant that research would be primarily qualitative. This type of research stresses, the socially constructed nature of reality. It also ‘goes beyond mere fact and surfaces. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question.’(Denzin, 1989, p83).

Furthermore an ethnographic approach to the methodology allows for a more natural study of how experience can be shared since it is informed by the phenomenological school of thought and grounded theory (Glaser and

Strauss, 1967) which will be discussed in the following chapter. I hope to present evidence in this dissertation which will suggest that institutions take up peer mentoring as a main form of professional development. The utilization of the skills of all the members of a staff can only lead to positive growth and development. This should prove true especially in international settings, where so many and varied strengths and skills are available.



# **Chapter Two**

## **Conceptual framework and literature review**

The rationale in Chapter One indicated a move in western education toward mentoring (Cf Chapter One p.18) and teachers being taught by other teachers in the workplace. Mentoring is a powerful tool for development of teachers but I also came to realize after early trials in peer mentoring at the Naval School (Cf Chapter One pp.4 and 5) that peer mentoring is an even more effective tool for professional growth. It is non - threatening and leads to dynamic interaction which in turn can affect the quality of teaching (Cf p.5). Through peer mentoring techniques, the teaching team utilizes all the varied skills of the teachers including transferable skills that may have been derived from other experience outside of teaching and teacher training establishments.

Such conclusions arriving from early research trials in mentoring and peer mentoring, coupled with reading completed for the mentoring component of the Open University's MA Ed programme, had indicated that mentoring could be a very useful strategy within schools and training institutions which were open to promoting a learning environment within a learning organization.

As peer mentoring trials proceeded, it became clear to me that the professional growth of EFL teachers was best effected by collaborative activities like peer mentoring. The many and varied skills of teachers (Cf Chapter One p.18), when shared and managed effectively, led to a certain dynamism within the team's approach to teaching and to curriculum development. Hence I began to see peer mentoring as a major strategy for developing the professionalism of teachers in my settings.

In an effort to comprehend the rapid rise in status of professional development in schools over the last ten to fifteen years and the new emphasis on learning environments, I turned to experienced educators such



as West - Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998 p.101), who point out that 'coaching' in a 'non-hierarchical relationship' and 'critical friendship ....a peer and reciprocal relationship', are highly important for sustained professional learning. These authors point also to the notion that teams contribute a great deal to individual and organisational learning and define a team as 'a group that is *learning how* to learn.' It became apparent that peer mentoring as a focused activity facilitates such *learning how* since it is an open - ended activity implying no assumption that the outcome of sharing skills should be right or wrong. It concentrates on the developmental aspects of *learning how*. I was convinced that the *learning how* inherent in sharing skills and in open - ended or dialogic learning was an integral part of professional development and therefore decided to investigate peer mentoring and professional development as interrelated aspects of teacher learning.

Close examination of collaborative learning would also benefit my research as this kind of learning leans towards the collaborative workplace mentioned in Chapter 1 (Cf p.21) and championed by Marshall (1995)

The collaboration I initially witnessed at the Naval School from 1997 to 2000 and at the Military College in 2000 had appeared to be an effective way of dealing with change and constantly changing environments but as Eraut (1994 p.30) notes, there tends to be resistance to change and therefore perhaps to the introduction of strategies like peer mentoring which might disturb prevailing notions of what works in the classroom: 'thus changes which affect institutional norms and routines will only take hold if accompanied by a degree of resocialization; ...the normal response ...will be to attempt to minimize its effect.'

Most of my respondents, however, in early responses to questionnaire and interview all took a measure of pride in defining themselves as collaborators, even if they did not know or accept that they were peer mentoring. I decided therefore to examine the literature on collaboration especially as a tool for responding to change and hoped to find that



collaboration might be viewed as a general strategy within which the more defined skills of peer mentoring could be introduced and trialled in my settings.

## Concepts

Arising from the above discussion, the three main concepts underlying this research are:

- Mentoring as a tool for the development of teachers
- Continuous Professional Development
- Teacher collaboration as a strategy for handling change

All the above concepts involve the central theme of learning and are concerned with the nature of learning. Hence, as I take each area and review the literature, I will make reference to the kind of learning that is occurring and link this to my own settings.

## What is Mentoring?

The central concept within this research is mentoring as a means of teaching, guiding and learning. Mentoring has, over the last twenty years in England, become a major training aid for staff development and continuous professional development and the means by which new teachers are trained. Notions of what a mentor might be have moved on since Philips-Jones' (1982) description of six types of mentor roles, two of which were 'authority figure' and 'organization sponsors'. Such functions, in the present manner of thinking about mentoring, might have blocked open sharing. Mentor roles are now usually described as a mixture of *guide*, *friend*, *advisor* and suchlike non -threatening terms. Kerry and Shelton Mayes (1995), in their introduction, refer to mentor roles as:

- Nurturing
- Role modelling
- Functioning as teacher, encourager, counsellor and friend
- Focusing on the professional development of the mentee

- Sustaining a caring relationship over time (Kerry and Shelton Mayes 1995. p8)

Mentors on a research project, which Elliot and Calderhead (1995) monitored, related perceptions of their own role image during an experience of mentoring trainee primary school teachers. Some mentors referred to rationales for their approaches to mentoring as based on their own first images of teaching and some referred, interestingly for my research, to other career roles eg one mentor referred back to her role as a counsellor. Indeed, there appeared to be only lukewarm support from the mentors, for ‘recognisable professional growth of mentees attributable to the higher education institute’ (Elliot and Calderhead 1995 p.47).

The role of mentor has been often tied in to the notion of initial teacher training and to continuous development of teachers. Furlong et al’s (1988) analysis of four levels or *dimensions* of teacher training attempted to outline the components of initial teacher training. Level a) was classified as *direct practice* and that could be contrasted with, for example, level d) which was *disciplinary theory*. Three of these *dimensions of training* are inherent in most academic teacher training courses. The practical aspects of *direct practice*, however, seemed to indicate that teachers were the people who knew best about their own setting.

As teachers attempted to enhance their professionalism during the late 1980s and 1990s the move was made to allow teachers: ‘to play a prominent part in the initial training of teachers as well as their own development’. (Bridges 1995 p.71). Bridges calls this ‘a comfortable conjunction’ (Bridges 1995 p.71), but argues that teaching adults how to teach is not the same as being a good classroom teacher. Different skills are required in passing on good practice. This points to the importance of the training of mentors. But the distinction for me is too fine. There is no conclusion in my research that *either* you teach well *or* you teach others to teach well.



Any teacher may have strong skills in one area and be weaker in others. With peer mentoring, the sharing of those strengths and weaknesses is seen as the best use of collaborative resources although the manager, the facilitator, must guide best use of this collaboration and keep it focused.

Accepted mentoring practice in Great Britain seems to lean toward the professional guiding of trainee teachers or of novice teachers undergoing induction. The role of mentor is more as a guide, a leader who passes on his/her professional experience to a less experienced novice. In illustration of this point, the Hillgate Group are cited by Maynard and Furlong (1995) as advocating that some skills, including complex ones of high moral and cultural value, are best learned 'by the emulation of experienced practitioners and by supervised practice under guidance' (Maynard and Furlong 1995 p.18).

This research questions whether or not this one - way learning is not *monologic* in nature, since it expects a particular outcome or leads to a particular organisational goal. It is not truly open learning.

David Bridges (1995) notes the shift in the 1980s from Higher Education courses to school based training. By the 1990s, school - based training in initial training of teachers (twenty four weeks of the thirty six week PGCE) had been introduced. Bridges (1995) notes a move to a corporate model of school -based training which would put its mark on the trainee in the way that Sony or ICI claimed, in the 80s and 90s, that their training programmes bore their own distinctive stamp. This corporate approach does not seem to me to tally with collaborative professional training or the *dialogic* nature of peer mentoring which allows for open - ended learning.

This distinction between *monologic* and *dialogic* mentoring is at the heart of this research. Therefore, one of the most important readings, as far as this Kuwait-based research is concerned, is Bokeno and Gantt (2000) on Dialogic Mentoring. The discussion they develop informs the notion of what open learning is. It also informs the action research and the



methodological analysis because it becomes a tool for measuring interaction, a benchmark by which to judge the effectiveness of open communication. Conventional mentoring relationships, although 'they could be a viable mechanism for relationship and community-building and the diffusion of learning practices', end up 'underutilized and enacted around monologic themes' (Bokeno and Gantt 2000 p.238). Monologic themes operate on stability and clarity whereas deviation is an undesired state that requires a corrective response. Bokeno and Gantt's (2000) understanding of monologic mentoring is that deviation from a certain organizational or managerial goal is not expected in standard mentoring relationships. This view coincides with my considered opinion about most traditional mentoring relationships; they are supervisor to – teacher, experienced teacher to inexperienced teacher, top – down communication. Although the mentee might be encouraged to reflect on his/her practice and input ideas him/herself, the implicit message would be usually that the mentor knows better and that he/she will guide the mentee to fit in to the organisation or institution.

Real learning is in dialogic mentoring which allows for continual exploration, is open-ended, allows for contradiction and is admirably suited as a tool for the learning organization. I found, as the research progressed, this dialogic notion became more and more relevant to the type of peer mentoring I encouraged at the Military College and which I attempted to encourage on an institution – wide basis. Secondly it became the benchmark by which the interaction at the British Council between the RSA trainees and between them and their course tutors, was judged. Thirdly, at the international school, the quality of collaboration between teachers creating a whole school change in curriculum was assessed by the same criterion.

Maynard and Furlong (1995) discuss changes of cognition as teachers progress from novice to expert and suggest that novices are 'not yet 'able to see' (Maynard and Furlong 1995 p.15). This research would qualify that position. In this setting I have seen examples of a different type of sharing



of experience eg. the young influencing older, sometimes more experienced, professionals. Very useful, too, is experience learned outside of teaching as it is transferred into a learning setting and utilized in classrooms. The metacognition referred to by Berliner (1987) and Maynard and Furlong (1995), amongst others, could be represented, upon reflection on my research, by an older, experienced teacher reviving interest in his/her teaching through co-analysis and reflection with a novice teacher. or through having a peer, with a fresh approach, observe his/her lesson and feeding back in post - lesson discussion.

Theory is always being developed as reflection – in-action continues. Maynard and Furlong (1995) hold up the reflective practitioner model of mentoring as perhaps the final stage of training teachers. This means that trainee or novice teachers might aspire to reflecting on their practice and mentors could encourage this reflection by gradually allowing them to become independent and to make trainee teachers, perhaps fresh from exposure to new theory, bring another type of reflection, *reflection – on-theory*, into the mentoring experience. In this way any interaction with mentors should be a refreshing experience for the mentor as well as the mentee.

The Kolb (1984) experiential cycle is as much a theory - into - action cycle as it is action - into - theory. It is Schon's (1987) notion of the reflective practitioner which links with this action cycle. Schon's ideas on the *artistry* employed by the professional lead him to think of the professional (in this case I think of the teacher) as continuously reflecting on and adjusting his/her practice. Since the Kolb (1984) cyclical process involves four stages in any one cycle (*concrete experience, observation and analysis of this, abstract reconceptualization and active experimentation*), this process is closely linked to reflective practice. Reflective practice integrates theory and practice, thought and action and is, as Schon (1987 p.31) described it, 'a dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skillful.'



With a new emphasis upon teachers knowing their own practice best, training developed in the 1980s and 1990s into a partnership between college and school and there was a movement away from supervision of trainee teachers by college - based tutors to other, experienced, practitioners mentoring them. The benefits of school - based training are now widely recognized and with government policy allowing for certain trainees to do much of their training in schools, achieving Qualified Teacher Status after two years of practical experience in schools is now a possibility for certain types of entrant to the profession. This recent development makes mentoring in the workplace even more important as a training aid.

For the purposes of any research involving peer mentoring it is useful to note how teachers after initial training and induction might progress professionally.

Berliner (1994) differentiates between different stages in a teacher's development, suggesting a progression in a teacher's career from novice through advanced beginner to competent, proficient and eventually becoming expert. Although I accept that a teacher can at different times and in different circumstances attain most of these levels, I do not see the progression as linear. Jarvis (1994) also questions whether every teacher gets to the end of the progression. Clearly, he says, not everyone does become an expert and implies that some teachers do not continue to learn: 'the point....about the failure to learn from experience becomes crucial.' (Jarvis, 1994 p.35). The progression to stage of expert presumes that teachers are open to acquiring 'knowledge *how* and tacit knowledge from their practice' (Jarvis 1994 p.35). My contention would be that learning how to learn is best facilitated by an interactive process of continuous peer mentoring when all the experience of the teachers is pooled. In this way the tacit knowledge that comes with trial and error, without the teacher knowing *why* or *when* he/she might acquire it, is more readily absorbed.

MacGilchrist et al (1997) also questions Berliner's line of progression: 'Like schools, teachers cannot be treated as a homogenous group.



...individuals bring, to any proposed change, different skills, knowledge and attitudes depending on their previous experience' (MacGilchrist et al. 1997 p.17).

Competences have also been seen as a way of measuring professional abilities but Elliot and Calderhead (1995) question the move toward competence testing in the 1980s and 1990s whereby teachers could be evaluated by a checklist of competences. These authors point out that 'growth in teaching is a process that occurs across a considerable period of time and needs to be fostered in ways that are unique to the profession' (Elliot and Calderhead 1995 p.41).

In the international EFL world, peer coaching or peer mentoring (in contrast to mentoring, for example by a head of a department) would be a more appropriate type of mentoring amongst staff since it is impossible to always judge who is more expert than the other. It is clear to me, from observation, that some teachers are stronger in certain competence areas than others and this is not necessarily linked to experience of teaching. Some highly experienced teachers are novices in Kuwait and some freshly qualified EFL teachers offer fresh insights into methodology. If they have recently completed the RSA course they already have been steeped in collaborative methods. Older, more experienced, staff usually have not.

Given the human resources within a large EFL operation and the diversity of experience and qualifications, it is logical to initiate a peer mentoring system whereby all experience is utilized to effect a collaborative workplace.

Although a good number of recent examples of peer mentoring can be found in the literature, they are mainly concerned with the training of new teachers and induction of novices into schools in the USA.

There appears to be a gap in the literature especially where peer mentoring in the international setting is concerned and the hope is that this research

will throw light on the efficacy of peer mentoring and collaboration in the international EFL/ESP setting.

Moreover, in their highly relevant study, Evertson and Smithey (2000) contribute to an overview of preparation of mentors. They were motivated to recast the mentor's role from helping new teachers *emotionally* to helping them *systematically* through dialogue and reflection. They thought mentors would not only encourage the survival of new teachers but also 'lay the foundation for innovative practice.' (Evertson and Smithey, 2000 p.295.)

Another useful research initiative focused on a peer coaching study which was broken into three phases. Kohler and Crilley (1997) relate how four teachers participated in a study of the effects of peer coaching using three consecutive steps:

- an initial baseline phase – teaching
- completion of the same pedagogical tasks with peer coach involvement.
- completion of the tasks alone.

Analysis was made of the peer coach interaction, modifications in teaching due to peer coach involvement and sustainment of changes when the teacher worked alone. This article is one of the few that found links between collaborative work, specifically peer mentoring, and a stepped experiment. The above authors report that few studies have allowed formal observation of practice to evaluate results – normally peer coaching studies focus on teacher's own reports.

In Kohler and Crilley's study, three of the teachers responding had nineteen or more years of experience. A fourth teacher was beginning her second year. A fifth person (Crilley) served as peer coach. The study shows that all four teachers expanded or refined their procedures after collaborating with the coach. Their final conclusion is, however, that 'it is important to develop coaching procedures that are both feasible and effective for teachers to use' (Kohler and Crilley 1997 p.248) Despite this positive outcome they make it clear that; 'a host of issues merit further investigation' (Kohler and



Crilley 1997 p.249). Similarly, Ackland (1991), links teachers' instructional methods and student outcomes. Kohler and Crilley (1997) state, however, that, 'to this point, few coaching studies have encompassed formal examination of both teacher change and student performance' (Kohler and Crilley 1997 p251).

Students' progress ought to reveal the final effectiveness of teacher implementation of peer coaching, although such progression will take time. At the Military College I attempted to gather limited data on student progress whilst peer mentoring was in progress and some results are outlined in the research findings section of this thesis (Cf.p84). The positive student response to lessons where teachers collaborated and used feedback at the British Council was noted. The impact on discipline of a newly designed curriculum, was monitored at the International School.

Although searches for peer mentoring, as I understand the term, bring little response, there are a number of recent findings which relate to collaborative work amongst teachers and collaborative mentoring

It is interesting to note Sarah Fletcher's (1997) reflections on her transition from being a school mentor to a mentee as a university lecturer. She was able to draw parallels between both roles and could speak positively about both experiences: 'It was encouraging to be asked about my experiences as a school-based mentor and I felt that a genuine effort was being made to take account of my previous experience' (Fletcher 1997, p.50). By way of contrast, although I have vigorously thrown myself into facilitating mentoring and peer mentoring and enjoyed the many challenges it afforded, my experience of being mentored by my principal in the international school was not so positive. My principal did not take into account my former experience or attempt to utilize it with other staff. The problems with discipline were partly blamed on myself and other foreign teachers who were not teaching the way she, the Arabic headteacher, might have done and which she occasionally demonstrated. More of this outcome will be described in Chapter Four. My main deduction from this comparison is that



whereas Fletcher's mentor appeared to open every door for her and had training in the mentoring process, my *mentor* was not trained, although she used that word to describe herself. The principal was enthusiastic and culturally tuned in to her students' expectations but not truly open. I reflected, to other ways of organizing and teaching difficult classes.

.

Garvey (1999) links forms of mentoring to structure of school and management styles. I have been aware of the influence of management style particularly on mentoring, but I am also of the opinion that a hierarchical and bureaucratic management seems to impede mentoring altogether as there is some fear that it may empower the teachers and question the present leadership. In the MOD context, the first company to control the four main centres was ELS, an American company, which gave me encouragement in introducing peer mentoring techniques at the Naval College but showed more restraint when I suggested we introduce mentoring as a central strategy in the company. By the time I had moved to the Military College, however, the new British company completely side tracked peer mentoring as a CPD exercise whilst it encouraged other types of presentation, on weekend mornings, at its main centre. These were presentations which for many centres had little or no relevance. (An example is given on p. 43.)

At the international school, too, the Arabic management appeared reactionary, culturally embedded in a system which was traditional and highly sensitive, sometimes resistant, to new materials or ideas. Although the management desired to have international status with an international curriculum this conflicted with their lack of willingness to have a flexible and open curriculum and their apparent restrictive practices with the teachers who would implement this curriculum.

Miller and Packham (1999) in their references to trials in 'Peer Assisted Student Support' (PASS) come round to the whole notion of learning and particularly peer learning when they describe able students volunteering at Cardiff University's business school to peer mentor first year students. The



scheme is classed as highly successful and the PASS scheme continues to thrive and to adopt a strategy which enables the students of today to become, in effect, the mentors and lecturers of tomorrow. The RSA Celta training, though slightly different in focus, promotes student learning through peer observation and other collaborative techniques and it is hoped they might begin their EFL teaching imbued with a sense of the value of peer mentoring and facilitate it in their new settings. Observations arising from following two mature trainee EFL teachers into their new jobs are that they do indeed value a system of peer feedback but that they fear to support it if it is not already in place.

Mitchell (1999) examines the efficacy of group mentoring. I was able, as a supervisor within the IPETQ setting, to initiate not only one to one peer mentoring but also group mentoring with the team, never more than eight, involving themselves in open meetings, usually with myself taking the lead as facilitator, to focus on an area of curriculum or teaching. The session might begin with an introduction emphasizing the value of listening, reflecting and keeping the discussion focused on the particular subject in hand. What characterized these meetings as group peer mentoring were:

- people involved had the same daily problems and goals
- people were focused on constructive answers for the whole team
- brainstorming and other collective techniques were used to elicit ideas
- a person trained in mentoring facilitated open discussion

Such meetings led to many useful suggestions on strategies for classroom work, subject knowledge improvement and curriculum building.

I noticed that group mentoring was also used during the RSA Celta course but here the whole group of fourteen were often focussing on perceived good and bad points in one of their peer's lessons. Great stress was exhibited by certain participants and one lady on one occasion walked out in tears. My own conclusion, and that of several respondents, was that in group peer feedback the course teacher should not have been present and she was seen as judgmental in her role as course supervisor and, therefore,



assessor of their abilities. There is also a danger of strong personalities dominating discussion. Mitchell (1999) states: 'some people are uncomfortable in a situation where there is an overtly dominant force' and again: 'A good facilitator is important to provide guidance and ensure dominance does not occur'(Mitchell, 1999 p.118).

In the preparation of mentors and mentees for any kind of mentoring experience involving adult learners, it might prove useful to establish some facts about adult learning as opposed to children learning.

**Adults:**

- are usually self directed in their learning
- have a great deal of experience to bring to their learning
- are interested in solving real life problems
- usually want to apply what they learn to their lives
- need to know why they are learning something
- respond more to intrinsic motivators (eg. personal satisfaction) rather than to extrinsic ones (eg. promotion).

Androgogy is discussed by

Such assumptions have significant implications for how individuals might be educated for mentorship of fellow teachers and suggests criteria for success. Since my peer mentoring trials involved fellow adults and fellow professionals, I decided to keep in mind these tenets whenever examining the effectiveness of peer mentoring experiences in all three main settings.

Useful insights into the interactive nature of peer mentoring are provided by Maynard (2000) in a study that highlights the place of the affective in mentoring relationships and how the mentor could feel as vulnerable as the mentees in a school situation. The precise role of mentors is brought into question as some appear too soft and do not critique enough and others by being negative destroy the confidence of the mentee. I could associate with the latter in my experience of being mentored at the international school whilst remaining professionally sensitive to what I perceived to be inherent qualities in peer mentoring.



Roberts (2000) takes a close look at the various perceptions of what mentoring means and such insights remind one of the complexity of the role of mentor. He also rightly points out that, unless we agree what mentoring is, it is very difficult to conclude that we are indeed carrying it out. He, interestingly, points out that the modern role of 'Mentor' was taken from Fenelon's 'Aventures de Telemaque' written in 1699 and not from Homer's model in the 'Odyssey'. The word itself did not enter into common usage till 1750. This article's phenomenological approach to literature, in an attempt to sum up what mentoring really is, emphasizes the diversity of mentoring roles. The author finds difficulty in defining it since it can mean different things in different relationships. He does point out a number of commonly held opinions, such as that mentoring aids the kind of reflective practice that Schon (1987) advocates. Importantly he notes though that: 'Based upon the literature sampled, *teaching-learning* appears as one of mentoring's essential attributes' (Roberts 2000 p.154). It is this duality of teaching and learning that my own research constantly returns to when seeking to define the process of mentoring and I hope to suggest, in my evaluation of findings in Chapter Five, that the learning is deeper, more open ended and more effective when *peer* mentoring takes place than in other situations.

Alred and Garvey (2000) take the view that mentoring aids transition of both personal and organizational goals and mentions 'the contribution mentoring can make to organisations going through transitions, such as becoming more knowledge productive'(Alred and Garvey 2000 p.269). This perspective is relevant to the transitions in curriculum in Kuwait, for example to the prospects the international school has of growth, once its curriculum has been internationally recognized. Even more important is the warning that mentoring alone is not a panacea for all ills. The culture of the institution or organization must change first. The researchers suggest also, as I had hypothesized when I first undertook this research, that 'most companies that believe themselves to be knowledge intensive, .....do not



capitalize on ideas and creativity...they buy in expertise they already possess' (Alred and Garvey 2000 p.270).

Although some research findings have confirmed my positive experiences of peer mentoring and others have explored quite deeply the changing roles of mentors, for example Lucas (2001), the greatest impact of success, which involved collaboration, is related in Perry's (1999) account of positive professional development in a school in Australia through peer mentoring or partnerships in professional development. Although this began as a collaboration between university lecturer (the facilitator) and the school, it is noted that such an initiative can be very productive. After a short time the facilitator dropped out and the teachers were left talking to each other. This appeared to be a true learning experience with the teachers asking each other how they themselves preferred to learn. This involved some surprising results. The whole staff worked out, in teams, ways of introducing activities that involved appropriate learning models, eg for slow learners. This was such an interesting finding that I decided it could be a useful criterion for judging the new curriculum at the international school. The teachers who worked within my Social studies team were, notionally, in a position to examine how they and their students learned in order to encourage an effective implementation of the curriculum.

### **To sum up on Mentoring:**

The emphasis in the Open University's MA.Ed E830 literature and particularly the main ideas mooted by Kerry and Shelton Mayes (1995 ) is on mentoring of novices or trainee teachers. The general notions on mentoring, the philosophy behind it and the skills required to be an effective mentor are of great interest but in this research context, where all teaching experiences are different and there is a multinational and multicultural teaching force, the thrust of the research moves towards *peer mentoring*. There is such diversity of skills in a large EFL establishment like IPETQ/MINDEF and the International School that the mentoring needs to be as interactive as possible



## Continuous Professional Development

The development of professional knowledge and skills is a major consideration within and outside of the profession of teaching. One of its roots can be found in Carl Rogers' (1967) interpretation of self actualization and in Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. Management theory and practice since the 1970s have concentrated on enhancing human ability and potential. Managerial styles are turning toward the view promoted in most modern MBAs – that a hierarchical, coercive, way of managing people does not achieve as good results as the management style that promotes human growth and development and attempts to create the environment wherein these can flourish.

Teachers, like other professionals, came to need to be *empowered* to contribute to the management of their places of work and their own futures. This empowerment would reflect on every aspect of their work, for example how they could learn from each other, how they reflect on and alter the curriculum and how they change their strategies of teaching. However, tension is created when the goals of the teacher are not those of the organization / school. West – Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998) refer to the '*perceived*' tension 'between individual and organisational needs' as 'one of the abiding problems in managing professional learning'(West – Burnham and O'Sullivan, 1998 p.25).

Continuing Professional Development is seen as different from Continuing Professional Education by Eraut (1994). He posits that 'the term 'Continuing Professional Education' (CPE) usually refers to formally organized conferences, courses or educational events rather than work - based learning, while the term 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD) refers to both' (Eraut 1994 p.11). This is an important distinction since many teachers and managers of teachers feel that 'inset' days or days for lectures and improving knowledge are enough to effect change. Whilst it is true that these days can be informative and to some degree reflective they do not have the same 'learning how' that action research via peer mentoring can effect. It is the *learning organisation*, however, that is



presented by Eraut (1994) as a model which integrates individual aspirations with the needs of the organisation.

IPETQ tended towards certain 'inset' mornings which were provided by those near to the locus of power and who 'toed the company line' (Cf Research Diary Nov12 2000). The hierarchical approach demanded the presence of teachers from all sites, even when the subject matter was not relevant to certain sites. An example of this is noted in the research diary for Jan 15 2001: 'This weekend (Thursday morning), there is an inset exposition on banding of paragraph writing. Dr Barry, from IPETQ's Kuwait Petroleum Centre, will deliver a lecture on IELTS banding and assessment of writing. The teachers at my centre do not wish to give up their free time for a lecture which is not relevant to their centre. The training officer rang to see how many would attend. After checking I had to reply none. The same teachers, however, have put their energies into my peer mentoring development activities mainly because as Jim said: 'it's all in a days work and it makes sense.'

The learning organization according to West – Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998) is 'a powerful way of reengineering for life - long learning'(West – Burnham and O'Sullivan p.28). Such a concept of learning is important for this research.

In a recent teacher survey for the Teacher Training Agency in the UK, concerning the effectiveness of professional development, 89% of teachers thought it useful or very useful. However, only 26% thought it had a big impact on classroom practice, (MacGilchrist et al,1997). This lack of conviction on the part of teachers, that it does not affect the environment of student learning, creates a central dilemma.

The rapid rate of change in modern society and the seemingly limitless access to information and knowledge that technology, particularly the internet, provides, has created a need for adjustment. Education and organizations have been forced to think about *how* we learn. Teachers need



to link their classroom practice with reflection upon how they and their umbrella organizations learn.

Senge (1990) examines this idea of *how* an organization learns and describes five disciplines at the root of the learning organisation. Two of the five - 'shared vision' and 'team learning' (the others being 'personal mastery', 'mental models', and 'systems thinking') - relate directly to the collaborative approaches employed in peer mentoring.

Holly (1994) identifies what learning organisations actually do and enumerates three approaches that inform my approach to peer mentoring.

These can be summarized as:

- Learning Organisations institutionalise reflection – in – action
- Learning Organisations learn from themselves
- Learning Organisations promote a continuum learning

Lawler (1992) who investigated 'congruence', or how certain processes 'fit' certain organisations, also joins Senge (1990) and Holly (1994) in recognizing that there are different types of learning organisation. The different genres are outlined by West-Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998).

- *Prescriptive* organisations utilize bureaucratic procedures and their thinking goes on outside of the working process of their staff.
- *Entrepreneurial* organizations attempt to make paradigm shifts by whole-organization reviews. They *react* to circumstances.
- *Unlearning* organisations attempt to make paradigm shifts but cannot necessarily carry them out.
- *Learning* organizations make the paradigm shift but also 'acquire the capacity to go through the whole process again' (West-Burnham and O'Sullivan 1998 p.39).

There is a cyclical kind of learning inherent in the final kind of organisation listed that empowers managers and staff to accept a holistic type of organisational learning but the first, the *prescriptive* organisation, seems to



point to IPETQ as a whole and to Qatar St . in particular as Table 1.1. (CF p.4 ) sets out in Chapter One and its wider explanation (Cf. p.10) indicates.

This cyclical *reflection – in – action* that a good institution employs also could be applied to good teacher learning. The teacher and the institution, in this way, are learning from each other and their goals are similar This is what West-Burnham and O’Sullivan (1998) call, deep or double / triple loop learning. They challenge school leaders to ‘recapture their position for leading learning...we might then stand some chance of bringing about the lifelong learning goal of *learning individuals in learning organisations for a learning society*’ (West-Burnham and O’Sullivan 1998 p.41).

Another positive research finding, this time concerning peer observation for professional development in a consortium of primary schools in Leeds, is reported by Threlfall and Smith (2001). For this TTA funded research consortium, teachers were encouraged to pop in, even for ten minutes at a time, so that cover would not necessarily always be needed, to a colleague’s class. The feedback sessions tended to be a number of teachers focusing on areas of mutual interest or concern rather than on any particular feature of a teacher’s performance. The result was non - threatening but also developmental: ‘The kind of peer observation undertaken at Leeds still brought improvements to the quality of teaching but also to the thinking and understanding of the teachers’ ( Threlfall and Smith, 2001. p.50). A better form of professional development was encouraged in that such professional collaboration does not only focus on particular teaching faults or strengths but opens the discussion to areas that mutually benefit a group of teachers. In my own peer mentoring trials I have noticed that discussing wider issues during feedback sessions takes the eye off the teacher’s performance and more onto everyone learning because we all view ourselves as teacher learners. Peer mentoring facilitates this approach, whereas normal mentoring has the *older and wiser* syndrome of passing on words of wisdom to the novice and possibly assessing the younger practitioner during this process. In Leeds it is interesting to note that, if heads or deputies wished to



be involved in the trials, then they themselves had to be open to being observed in practice

The main basis of learning that I perceive to be valid in the international setting is Continuous Professional Development as opposed to Continuous Professional Education between which Eraut (1994) makes clear distinctions. Continuous Professional Development is school based and addresses itself to improving teacher and student learning in that setting. It may also take in some external conferences as long as the learning is seen to develop the whole staff rather than individuals in isolation.

Sachs (1999) draws attention to teacher research as a basis for professional development and indeed I feel able to say that I feel my own research has led to my own professional renewal and most of those who have been my peer mentors and therefore, in a real sense, my co – researchers, have reported to me that they have felt invigorated by involvement in research - based change. The debate on education is no longer the preserve of academics; we, more and more, need to refer to the practitioners who have now begun to reflect on their practice and to use the intervention of action research to effect change. I personally have found that teacher research is a powerful tool for empowerment of educators.

Koeppen and McKay (2000) examine a case of long term mentoring where the two authors reflect on their twenty one years of mentoring relationship and the friendship and professional trust that built up between them. They claim that women like to think in terms of long term support. I would broaden this desire for continued support to male teachers. My respondents, men and women, are often part of international networks where they meet up with teachers or are invited into jobs in other countries by ex-colleagues that they have known and trusted. My interest in these researchers' findings, however, is that an individual mentoring experience could nourish two people for so long and continues to do so. Although, in the very mobile world of EFL, such continuity might be difficult to preserve, I feel that continuity of practice in peer mentoring produces the best results and the



setting up of networks of co - mentors via the internet and international meetings would be something that would give added kudos to the notion of peer mentoring.

Highly relevant to my own findings and to my research questions, especially in relation to peer mentoring affecting the role of teachers, are the findings of Mullen et al (2001) in a case study involving a school seeking accreditation. Here the accreditation process – a search for standards that can be seen by state bodies to be acceptable – clash with a self study programme for teachers in Alabama: ‘The control issues involved in applying standards to schools,’ the authors state, ‘can stifle any real change’ (Mullen et al, 2001 p.101). The case in question had local and state powers organizing a ‘quick fix’ for the school that required certain curriculum changes. The teachers, however, wanted to conduct a thorough examination into their school through a self study programme, with teachers leading the process of renewal at the school. This process appears to have been almost identical to the clash between setting up a new curriculum at the international school in Kuwait (for accreditation purposes) and our ‘whole school’ teacher discussion. A number of issues were on the table for discussion including the notion, which I introduced to my Social Studies team, of a ‘living curriculum’ which would constantly be tried and tested and which would also build in to pupil lessons factors such as ‘learning how to learn’ and other reflective processes. This article highlights a need for allowing teachers to be empowered to lead curriculum change that is meaningful to their own school environment.

Harris and Anthony (2001) follow on in the same vein as they examine the role of collegiality and allow both novice and veteran teachers to voice their discontent with non - supportive schools. An example is supplied of how a teacher was on the brink of giving up the profession when she was blamed for not motivating the students and a break down in discipline and then, upon a change to a school that was supportive, grew personally and professionally and learned to love the daily challenges of school.



Collegiality, as an empowering tool in the growth of teachers' professional identity, is central to all my research settings.

Holden (2002) discusses, from the point of view of assistant head of an 11-18 comprehensive school, the learning community and how mentoring especially aids in teacher - led school improvement. He explains how mentors learn as much if not more than the mentee: 'through acting as a co-researcher, working with rather than on them, my own understanding of classroom practice and the impact of inquiry-led development work on school development has been greatly enhanced' (Holden 2002, p.18). In my work as a supervisor of EFL teachers I discovered that I commanded greater attention and respect when I played down the hierarchical role and when, calling myself a *peer* mentor, I invited teachers to co- research with me in a spirit of team collaboration. Holden (2002) suggests that any mentor-mentee relationship bears fruit for both parties. I would suggest that facilitating peer mentoring and joining the team as one of those peers is even more fruitful as a learning device for a middle manager.

Varghese (2002) reconsiders the novice / expert discussion which is based on the traditional view of older more experienced persons mentoring novices. The setting was a summer training practicum for English as a Second Language teachers. The author points out that many of those entering the profession were already state - licensed teachers or had been very experienced people from other professions. In this sense the study is very pertinent to my research since in EFL teaching there is a wealth of skills available from former experiences, many of them transferable, and this is one of the reasons that peer mentoring might, profitably, be used in place of mentor- mentee relationships. The author concludes that the study: 'suggests the importance of being able to adopt a discourse that combines the voice of the expert with that of the peer, or to be able to have the flexibility to adopt both styles' (Varghese 2002 p.31). This *discourse* is of interest to my study where appropriate attention needed to be paid to the language of communication because what was meant by peer mentoring was not immediately clear to all.



Most research - based writing points to Professional Development as a positive development of teachers abilities but Keedy at al, (2001). though supporting sustained teacher - led development policies, indicate that: ‘for most PD policies this has not been the case’ (Keedy at al. 2001 p.39). These researchers point to many impositions that do not really involve teachers in true learning situations and certainly do not empower them. They then isolate real PD learning situations, usually in schools where teachers are truly empowered.

Much of the research writing on professional development returns repeatedly to principles for effective professional development. I have attempted to extract some key notions from my examination of recent research findings on CPD. They are:

- Collegiality and empowerment of teachers
- Teacher – led change
- Supportive learning environments
- Teachers learning from the chief resource within their school ie other teachers
- Continuity
- Openness to change

### **Teacher collaboration as a strategy for handling change**

Change and unstable environments are marks of the settings for this research. A new company took over MOD English training in 2000 and it was entirely different in its management approach to ELS (the former company). The Military College where the researcher was supervisor for eighteen months was marked by a number of factors that required adaptability and reflexivity on the part of the teaching team. Two of the other three sites had to react to changing circumstances. These were the JCSC and the Naval College. The fourth centre at Qatar Sreet, seemed to be imbued with the mark of the prescriptive course it ran and a hierarchical attitude toward teachers. Although an exam – driven and non –



collaborative ethos governed management and teachers, the centre was always obliged to borrow teachers from other centres and the high turnover of instructors created some instability there.

It is interesting to note that the centres where most teachers indicated satisfaction (See Table 1.1 in Chapter One) were those that had to respond to either change or challenge.

Change is about learning. Learning is effected through change: ‘Personal and organisational change is very much about shifting cultural norms and expectations’ (West - Burnham and O’Sullivan, 1998 p.45). Once teachers value their own and their students’ success it means that there has been a mind shift from low consensus to high consensus activity: ‘When teachers conversed in either moderate or low consensus schools, they stressed students’ failings instead of triumphs perhaps to avenge themselves’ (West-Burnham and O’Sullivan, 1998 p.45). High consensus schools however encouraged ‘a more ennobling vision’ (West-Burnham and O’Sullivan 1998 p.45).

Peer mentoring is an interactive strategy that encourages positive thinking and engenders consensus. By consensus I do not mean that all teachers think alike on approaches to planning, teaching or curriculum development. I mean that they share the same philosophy of growth through sharing knowledge and skills. A ‘high consensus’ college within the MINDEF institution would be interpreted as one in which management and teaching staff have similar, strong, goals to achieve improved learning for all, not least the students. The improvement of student learning must always be the final goal.

Change issues involve leadership. Marshall (1995) discusses the power of collaboration where supervisors ‘must be coaches and mentors for their subordinates, who are not really subordinates, but their colleagues’ (Marshall, 1995 p79). However, he describes the danger of not having good leadership. The leader ought to be a coach but he is also a change agent or



catalyst and he is a manager and administrator. He cites an example of a company, CYLOR, where 'accountability was not clear'. CYLOR was 'failing to distinguish between the leadership role and the leadership function'(Marshall, 1995 p.79). Although Marshall (1995) promotes the function of leadership taken on by all the team there must be direction for reporting, final decision – making, assessment and providing clear expectations.

Such definition of role is relevant to the setting at IPETQ, where I noted a clash of roles in my own job. As I attempted to become the coach, the catalyst, the facilitator, I softened my role as supervisor, in a position of responsibility. When rigorous or warning roles were necessary I found it difficult to take up an authoritarian stance. This difficulty was further exasperated by pressure from IPETQ for supervisors to 'lay down the law'(Cf Diary 14 March 2000). IPETQ upper management appeared bureaucratic and traditional in its approach and did not seem, to support the collaborative efforts of teachers.

The answer to this problem lies in expansion of collaborative methods to the whole organisation. This will be discussed further in the methodology section. The collaborative approach to methodology underlies a process that leads to change. Marshall (1995) posits that this is not an overnight process: 'The primary use of the collaborative method is to create and manage a Collaborative Workplace' (Marshall 1995 p.37), and again: 'In the creation process we use the method to design, implement and realign the culture, processes and structure of the business from hierarchy, silos and command and control to collaboration' (Marshall 1995 p.38)

Organizational transformation is a process that is accomplished with and by the members of the company. The peer mentoring activities in three of the four centres of MINDEF are focused on a transformation, a shift of ideas from purely 'doing' to reflection - in -action. The nature of action research within teaching institutions means that researchers and teachers question the notion of leadership and the easy option of not changing the status quo. The



teacher's vision for his/her personal goals is compared and contrasted with the vision the organisation may aspire to.

.

Thus the reading on collaboration and change is my third and last reading area but closely associated to the other two main areas on mentoring and professional development. It is also important to note that ideas on continuous learning of teachers also emerge from the reading on change.

Although Fullan's (2001) main theories on responding to change are important, Fullan (1999) also expands the use of the chaos theory to attempt to understand change and the forces which govern it. Change is not easy to effect and it is within a certain complexity that we find change forces operate. Discussing ideas on collaboration (*inside* and *outside* collaboration) the author places emphasis on professional learning communities gathering explicit evidence on improved student performance: 'They (researchers) trace the reasons for this better performance to whether or not the school had a high professional community' (Fullan 1999 p31). This idea relates directly to the notion, that stems from my findings so far, that peer mentoring improves the perceived performance of students in that they showed interest in classes which were the product of teacher collaboration. Also numbers of passes improved over a period of time when peer mentoring was being encouraged at the Military College. Although the value of this kind of result is limited within a qualitative study, it nevertheless points to positive improvement especially when qualitative questionnaires intimate that teachers experience much better interaction with classes when they have collaborated with colleagues on finding better ways to teach a lesson. The theories of chaos and complexity also find a practical parallel in the highly complex teaching situation at the Military College where, as I have pointed out in Chapter One (p.7), there are many variables at work on any given day.

Lee (2000) describes teachers reaction to change during the implementation of a curriculum change in Hong Kong. There was mixed reaction to such change but the author notes that in order to win teacher acceptance of the



new plans: 'staff or professional development should be critical, enquiry - based, participatory and practice based' (Lee 2000 p.108). In this way a teacher - led enquiry is recommended

Central to the notion of learning and continuous learning, through adopting novel practice such as peer mentoring, is the idea of changing teacher' beliefs and practices. Timperley and Robinson (2001) accept that such metacognition is essential for real change but concentrate, in their study of four schools in New Zealand, on the micro - processes involved in such change. Low achievement in New Zealand was blamed by teachers on external factors, social and political deprivation. During the intervention of their action research project 'substantive changes in both their assumptions and their practices', (Timperley and Robinson 2001 p.282), were demonstrated.

There was a shift or revision of what the authors call *schema* from cliches like 'the parents don't want to be involved' to 'perhaps parents don't feel welcome here' (Timperley and Robinson 2001 p.282). Much of the change was brought about by a change of cognition on the part of the teachers. The intervention was originally effected by the New Zealand Education Ministry. The same job of intervention could be done in an EFL international setting by trained facilitators in the type of reflection that brings about changes in cognition. The New Zealand study is a healthy reminder that teachers can develop a fixed mindset on the causes of poor learning and that with the right encouragement their schema can be changed.

The above study also questions our whole perception of external and internal causes of change. It is very common to hear complaints from teachers and instructors that others need to change rather than themselves.

As my experience at the international school drew to a close, the implementation of the new curriculum was causing great concern and nearly all the the teachers in the secondary department felt so pressurized that their comments suggested they could not override the constraints of a



management which did not encourage the empowerment of teachers or a liberal interpretation of the curriculum. Would they be able as a collaborative force to implement a meaningful curriculum by adapting and changing their own strategies for imparting subject knowledge and inviting students to question their learning? This did not seem to be the likely outcome and I will discuss why, in Chapter Five, when I evaluate the findings at the International School.

Wood and Millichamp (2000) undertook another research project, in a school in the United Kingdom, and they recount how teachers radically transformed their understanding of teaching and learning and their perceptions of themselves as learners. The initial focus was on changing the quality of student learning but quickly changed to teachers identifying how they themselves learned. The ethos of the school changed over two years, with better morale and collaboration in evidence. The conclusion recommends that ‘a strong institutional push is necessary in order for new professional attitudes to develop’ (Wood and Millichamp p.513).

Fung (2000) recounts a constructivist approach to curriculum innovation in Hongkong where normally the government imposes such change ‘through the use of a power-coercive strategy’ (Fung 2000 p.153). A constructivist approach is interpretative – it allows teachers to construct their own meaning in their own contexts. Here the teachers learned about a new pedagogy, one which took them away from narration and explanation in traditional style to more pupil - centred discovery, with more interaction from pupils. The article does state how difficult some teachers found this, often reverting to the old ways. Thus the power of cultural values in changing teacher attitudes is brought home to me. In so many international settings for EFL/ESP the teaching culture is highly traditional- for example in the Arabic world (where my own research is rooted), Japan, China and Malaysia, to name but a few.

## **Research Questions**

The above readings coupled with my focus on peer mentoring within EFL settings have led to the formation of certain research questions. The questions have been formulated out of the original action research aims (outlined on p.19).

1. To what extent does peer mentoring affect the continuous learning of teachers ?
2. To what extent does peer mentoring affect subject knowledge (in this case EFL)?
3. How does peer mentoring affect the quality of teaching?
4. How does peer mentoring affect curriculum development and building?
5. How does peer mentoring affect the way teachers respond to change ?
6. How do peer mentoring trials affect the role of teachers?

The questions have been reshaped within questionnaires and at interview and the respondents' views interspersed with my own interpretations and reflections are presented in Chapters Four and Five.



# Chapter Three.

## Research Methodology

I have chosen to use an ethnographic approach to action research in order to investigate peer mentoring in my three main settings. The six main research questions, outlined in Chapter Three (p. 55), are addressed through an interpretative methodology.

The main logic behind choosing ethnography within action research has been that it is indeed difficult to measure the impact of peer mentoring in any precise, numerical or positivistic way. In the qualitative tradition the reporting of results will be mainly interpretative and illustrative apart from a few instances where teachers return forms setting out frequency of collaborative and skill sharing activities over a defined period.

Early in the process of determining how I might approach this research I had imagined that perhaps I would mix quantitative with qualitative approaches to methodology and perhaps set up some kind of control group in one of the settings. My idea then was to monitor improvements in learning interest or even results of tests, after the intervention of peer mentoring for new curriculum implementation. As the research progressed, however, I realized that, because of the nature of the focus which has been on peer mentoring processes and on human and professional interaction, there was very little room for anything except the interpretative approach.

The positivist paradigm for research might well be useful for a future study which might wish to pinpoint results at different stages following intervention. In this research, however, quantitative results are limited to discussing how many teachers believed that they were peer mentoring in some form or other (See Chapter Four pp.83-84.of this dissertation). Also, supervisors' responses on teacher collaboration were grouped and tabled (Cf.p79). I also carried out a tabling of the number of incidences when respondents believed themselves to be in some way effectively collaborating with colleagues(Cf: Appendix 4). This provided, through a series of ticks, a

simple numerical indication of how many times in a week a teacher felt he/she had effected positive collaboration with a colleague or colleagues. I was aware of the possible artificiality of some of these results and used them only as an initial framework for the deeper more interactive qualitative research which was to be the main method thereafter.

Hamilton (2002) sums up the approach I have found to be most relevant in a publication that traces movements in research over the last eighty years or so: 'Action research entails interpreting actions and their likely outcomes in the light of different value positions. It fosters generalisations (ie inferences) that apply not to all places and all time but rather to the case in hand' (Hamilton 2002 p.160).

The methodology , which is discussed here with reference to the theoretical framework of the reading, the methods or tools used for collection of data and the analysis of data, stems from the nature of the research questions which all seek to identify processes and involve human reaction to change. The research is primarily qualitative in nature because the studies are carried out in naturalistic settings and involve drawing out inferences from complex situations.

Most forms of qualitative research have the following main features:

- A focus on natural settings
- An interest in meaningful interpretation, perspectives and understandings.
- An emphasis on process.

There are four areas that can be classified as falling within the kind of qualitative research which is relevant to my settings:

- Ethnography
- Teacher/supervisor as inside researcher
- Grounded theory
- Action research



There are also three elements of research to be discussed in relation to my research:

- Validity and Reliability
- The ethics of participant observation
- Generalizability

### **The Ethnographic Approach.**

Within the qualitative tradition I have chosen ethnography as the main methodology since, according to Gitlin et al ( 1993), it grew out of anthropological and naturalistic roots and then in the 1960s moved into interpretative mode. I am observing professional people who work and interact within different work cultures in international settings. Gitlin et al (1993 p.194) point out that: ‘The shift to interpretative anthropology in the 1960s meant that ethnographers became interested in cultural meanings.’ Debate ensued, concerning fieldwork practices, and there appeared a new genre of books ‘in which field workers recounted their experiences as participant observers’ (Gitlin et al, 1993 p.194). I have carried out all my research as a participant observer. Even though the actual initial observation of the RSA demanded that I take up the position of *fly on the wall*, the follow - up demanded teacher - to - teacher interaction and input by myself as an interested observer. By chance I worked closely at the International School with one of the new RSA teachers I had previously observed *at a distance*. Such a movement toward continuous participant observation within ethnography is highly relevant to my research.

Hammersley and Atkinson(1995) advocate the principles of ethnography whereby the researcher produces close description of processes, feelings, attitudes and actions in as natural a setting as possible. They also use the term ‘reflexivity’ to denote how the researcher adapts to his research interpretations, constantly creating new hypotheses. There is an instance of such a creation of hypothesis within the RSA Celta research. I was expecting to view only native speaker participants at the British Council training course for teachers. By week two, I realised that the presence of five non - native speakers from fourteen participants meant I had to adjust



action research aims for the course and to consider that course trainers might well concern themselves with an element of correction of their English as well as instruction in pedagogy. It immediately opened out the focus of observation, culturally and linguistically.

The ethnographic approach, which the research utilizes, with its underlying 'reflexivity', will induce results which, if organized into objective analysis and subjective analysis will throw light on better practice. In this research the objective elements lie in what teachers say about their situation and in finding opposing points of view about each situation described in the thick description presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation. The subjective views are written side by side with that description, mainly deriving from my personal diary which contains reflections upon and synthesis of those views. The main element of 'reflexive' research (linked to ethnographic and thick description) is that as new hypotheses come up the researcher adapts to them.

All through the process of writing this research I have had to reflect on the title, the hypothesis and the theory that informs my findings. I had, for example, to reflect on the nature of collaboration on the British Council RSA course. This has led to closer consideration of trainee teachers whose first language is not English and I will allude to some of the extra problems such trainees might face in the evaluation section of this thesis. This research is based upon the assumption that real life processes can be observed, recorded and interpreted in the manner that Grounded Theory promotes and that intervention through Action Research can be used to better unite the institution's organizational goals and individual goals of teachers. In this way there is an attempt to address those research questions which relate to teacher growth and to the institution which teachers operate within.



## Teacher / Supervisor As Inside Researcher

Hammersley (1993) promotes the idea of teacher as researcher and discusses how the teacher, in my case teacher and supervising teacher, is best suited to investigating processes within his/her own setting. *Processes* is the operative word for, as Hammersley suggests, the move from quantitative to qualitative methodology involves concern with processes rather than outcomes.

Bird (1995), however, even though she was conducting a slightly different kind of research and uniting quantitative and qualitative approaches, recounts important insights about her role as an inside researcher. She reports that, during her research over four to five years on the Open College Policy in London, she herself administered all the questionnaires, *in situ*, in all the classes. This was due to lack of enthusiasm on the part of tutors. 'This undertaking', she relates, 'had far reaching consequences in that it meant that I became in fact an observer in all the institutions .....had I not had a very personal interest in the subject I would not have undertaken to do this' (Bird 1995 pp54-55).

The participant observer comes up against a great deal of problems and a strong commitment to gathering the data is required. In Bird's (1995) case the inside approach helped her to get 100% per cent response to requests for interview but over and above that she states: 'When I came to interview people, I was not relying solely on what they were explicitly saying. I was constantly interpreting what was being said in the light of all the behaviour I had observed over a period of time'. She also reports: 'I also had a unique opportunity to establish rapport and empathy' (Bird 1995 p.55). This *insider knowledge* has assisted my own research since I needed, slowly over four to five years, to convince people to take up peer-mentoring then to be able to obtain their feedback on the whole process, as well as understand how management ethos pervades the settings. As a supervisor, who had also been a teacher and who still taught in several of the settings, I had access to management meetings, my own teacher meetings, other teachers'



meetings and I had access to the 'praxis' (in this case the classrooms and staffrooms) of nearly all of my respondents at one time or another.

Stenhouse (1995) is a strong advocate of the teacher researcher: 'It is not enough that teachers' work should be studied: they need to study it themselves' (Stenhouse 1995, p.31). In his account, in which he deals with curriculum development and with teaching itself, he quotes many other teachers and researchers who would support this approach. Hoyle (1972) interestingly describes the difference between the restricted professional and the extended professional. The restricted professional is of high calibre but what differentiates the *extended* is a wider concept of his or her professionalism. Hoyle (1972) also suggests the extended professional should have a commitment to curriculum theory and a mode of evaluation as well as participating in a wide range of professional activities. Stenhouse (1995 p32) questions whether this is sufficient and adds that the real professional is marked by 'the concern to question and to test theory in practice by the use of those skills, ie skills to study one's own teaching' (Stenhouse 1995 p32). Importantly, for my reference points in this research, he states 'the outstanding characteristic of the extended professional is a capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study, the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures.' (Stenhouse 1995 p32).

Dealing with methodology, Stenhouse (1995) observes that 'the approach which has been most attractive to research workers may be called 'social anthropological' (Stenhouse 1995, p32). In this way he reinforces the point of view that the 'social anthropological' rather shies away from quantification and uses detailed field notes as a means of recording. Stenhouse (1995) coins the phrase 'open classroom' and suggests that this redefines the teacher's role in so far as the teacher is involved in 'open negotiation' (Stenhouse 1995 p.32). He also discusses the interconnectedness of classrooms in a school: 'Each classroom should not be an island. Teachers need to communicate with one another. They should report their work' (Stenhouse 1995 p.32). He dismisses, however, doubts



about objectivity being a problem: ‘The problem of objectivity seems to me a false one. Any research into classrooms must aim to improve teaching...so the most clinically objective research can only feed into practice through an interested actor. There is no escaping the fact that it is the teacher’s subjective perception which is crucial for practice since he is in a position to control the classroom’ (Stenhouse 1995 p35). Furthermore, when dealing with theory into action he argues: ‘ the teacher is not faced with generalizing beyond his experience. In his context, theory is simply a systematic structuring of his understanding of his work’ (Stenhouse 1995 p34).

I have applied all the above logic to my own roles as supervisor and teacher. Hammersley (1993) also discusses the notion of teacher as researcher and outlines and contrasts advantages and disadvantages of being an insider teacher researcher, a role which affects the function of the participant observer. He spells out four advantages:

- teachers have access to their own intentions and motives
- teacher researchers usually have long-term experience of the setting
- a teacher already has relationships with colleagues and uses these in order to collect further data
- teachers are key actors and can test theoretical ideas in a way that an observer can never do

Set against these advantages he places some disadvantages:

- people can deceive themselves about their intentions and sometimes a wider context is required
- teachers’ experience may be distorted or biased. An outsider may be able to tap into wider resources
- relationships may constrain as well as help enquiry
- testing theoretical issues in a small area of work may conflict with what is needed for good practice. The researcher may not be able to test his ideas in a given situation (Hammersley 1993 pp.218 – 219).



Hammersley (1993) does not discourage teacher research but, rather, qualifies it. One of the drawbacks he presents is the space it requires in teacher's lives. That has not been pertinent to any of my own research, since, over the space of four to five years, I have not only been able to identify and test innovation on peer – mentoring but also to integrate beneficial reflective thought both into my own teaching and that of others. I have also sought to widen the settings since I myself moved into various settings and could draw comparisons between them.

### **Action Research**

Kemmis (1993) moves the argument away from the role of the insider researcher to the actual 'object' of the research, in this case peer-mentoring in practice. What distinguishes action research is its self - reflective cycle of 'planning, acting, observing and reflecting' (Kemmis 1993 p178). It is reflection in action and is rooted in the very 'praxis' of the teachers. Kurt Lewin, (1952) coined the phrase 'action research'. as early as 1944 and although involved himself in food habits and factory production, soon teamed up with educationalists to reconstruct curriculum and to examine the professional development of teachers. Stephen Corey, (1953) became an advocate of action research. This approach went into decline in the late 1950s but in the later 1960s met with a resurgence of interest. One of the main reasons for this renewed interest was 'the demand from within an increasingly professionalized teacher force for a research role, based on the notion of the extended professional investigating his or her own practice' (Kemmis 1993 p181). There was a revival of concern about the practical in the curriculum. At the same time, professionals did not perceive outsider research as completely relevant to their own educational practice. There was a desire for strategic action within the praxis of the teacher's world.

Action research, incorporating the reflection in action cycle which Schon (1983) projects as essential to the learning process, is the basis of much teacher led research over the last twenty years or so.

'Action research is a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention' (Cohen



and Manion 1994, p.186). It is research work based on the early ideas of Lewin (1952) that advocates practitioners as the best researchers into their own work. In this study there is an opportunity to improve the quality of teaching and learning by close observation of the sharing of experience through collaborative techniques within peer mentoring. These techniques might then be put forward for incorporation into an institution's development planning.

Early peer mentoring trials at the Naval School in 1998 led to the setting in motion of a cycle of collaborative planning, collaborative work in curriculum and in teaching followed by reflection by the team and by myself. Further observations, questionnaire answers and interviews for pilot work for this dissertation convinced me of the value of this intervention. The rationale section of Chapter One of this report discusses this background to research and other motivating factors (Cf. p.16ff.) but I mention the early cycle of reflection in action here again, since it convinced me that action research would be an appropriate method for further deeper research for this doctoral dissertation.

Lomax (1994) emphasizes the value of action research as an agent of change and reinforces the idea that it is about seeking improvement by intervention. It also involves the researcher as the main focus of the investigation. I would interpret this as meaning that respondents, who are my co-researchers in the various settings, constantly need to question our values. 'Taken for granted values need to be explored...the work of exploring values is a continuing process...in this sense the research is truly formative, facilitating change as a part of the process itself, not as a result.' (Lomax 1994 p160). This interpretation of action research is valid for the research questions presented in Chapter Two (Cf.p55), of this dissertation, in the sense that they all lead to possible change within an institution or enquire into relationships between qualifications and previous experience and improving practice. Nothing should be taken for granted, as the process of peer mentoring at three main institutions should continuously allow us to learn new approaches to our practice.



Lomax (1994) also posits that action research should:

- be collaborative – it is preferable not to engage in it in isolation
- be a rigorous form of enquiry that leads to the generation of theory from practice
- seek continuous validation by educated witnesses from the context it serves (Lomax 1994 pp.163-165).

I have attempted to keep these guidelines in mind in my own research but as the research findings will show the initial research was mainly a needs analysis with limited peer mentoring routines established at the four sites of the EFL/ESP training institution. I expected that future research would allow for more rigorous enquiry as the peer mentoring grew throughout the institution. In actual fact the peer mentoring did not grow as expected but where it had been facilitated it took strong roots within certain individuals. The data gathered from their responses during a continual process of investigation provides the continuous validation I refer to above.

### **Grounded Theory**

Glaser and Strauss (1967) first formulated grounded theory as a ‘comparative’ method. Easterby – Smith et al (1991) explain this method. A researcher studies a particular aspect or process in a number of different departments or organizations to draw out differences. The distinction would then ‘represent a *substantive* theory’, (Easterby – Smith et al 1991 p.86) about that aspect or process of education. However distinctions may also point to organizational rituals in certain cases. That is, whatever differences in approach, all the decisions/processes may be leading to one *more generalized formal* theory, eg. about hierarchical power. Both kinds of distinctive theories, substantive and generalized, are considered valuable within grounded theory. However, it is stated that the evaluation of the theory, whichever kind it may be, ‘should be sufficiently analytic to allow for generalisation whilst allowing for the theory to be related to personal experiences, thus ‘sensitising’ a person’s perceptions’ (Easterby – Smith et al 1991 p.86)



The present action research is aligned with the grounded theory approach in both the way the research is carried out and the way the data is analyzed in Chapter Four which deals with findings. Inductive analysis is used as opposed to logico-deductive methods which are more suitable to positivist traditions of research. The difference in the two main traditions are highlighted within the table discussed below in this section.

**Table 3.1: The differences in research traditions .\***

POSITIVIST	PHENOMENOLOGICAL
The world is outside the researcher (who is independent) The world is objective and Science is value free.	World is socially constructed and subjective. Science is driven by human interests
Focus on facts	Interpretation of meaning. Attempts to understand what is happening through observing the totality of each situation.
Causality	Researcher is part of what is observed. Science interpreted through human interests.
Formulate hypotheses and test them.	Develop ideas through induction from data
Logico -deductive analysis	Inductive analysis
Measuring –taking large samples	Multiple methods to investigate small samples –over time

\*Adapted from Easterby Smith et al (1991 p80.)

The choice of research tradition and the methodology suited the kind of day to day observation involved in this research which was a process and also aimed to be interventionist in the sense that the researcher intended to open the research out to the institution and attempted to apply collaborative methods in areas where they were not previously practiced.

## Validity and Reliability

The investigation into what makes for good qualitative studies is continued by Taylor et al (2001). These authors argue that perhaps there is no real validity in highly subjective analysis of, for example, thick description. Instead there is something else which is sought – an identification of critical elements in a study which leads to plausible interpretations without becoming obsessed with the right answer. Their study is concerned with peer reviewing qualitative articles and the criteria that might be used. One criterion mentioned involves ‘an inductive analysis of thick and descriptive data towards an unanticipated outcome’ (Taylor et al 2001 p.164).

The arguments about validity are examined by Bird et al (1996) in their module for E835 Open University MA.Ed. Discussing the debate as to whether or not validity of research is well founded or is assessable, the authors point to what they call ‘the only basis’ which is ‘a judgment about what is beyond reasonable doubt’ (Bird et al 1996, p.34). They set out three criteria for establishing this judgment. They are *plausibility*, that is : ‘whether we judge it as very likely to be true given our existing knowledge’, *credibility*, that is ‘we make a judgment about the likely threats to validity involved in the production of a claim and the likely size and direction of their effect’ (Bird et al 1996, p.34). And lastly we may have to seek further evidence if we do not accept plausibility or credibility and then to apply the plausibility- credibility test to this new evidence.

In deciding the validity or otherwise of a claim we ‘rely on presuppositions whose own validity we must take for granted.’ (Bird et al 1996 p.33). We make these presuppositions even in mathematical measurement where we take for granted certain properties of physical bodies without allowing for minor changes, for example caused by changes of temperature. The authors now make the important point: ‘Yet this ever - present uncertainty does not undermine our use of the concept of truth in that context, and there is no reason why it should do so in the research situation either’ (Bird et al. 1996 p.33). They continue to develop the argument by stating their belief that ‘all perception and cognition involves the construction of phenomena rather



than their mere discovery' (Bird et al. 1996 p.33). I was aware throughout my research that my respondents and I were constructing our own reality, for example through the sudden introduction of peer mentoring into the daily praxis of the teachers' lives. In our assessment of the value of such intervention it is highly likely that we construct subjective viewpoints particularly since we are prone to pre - disposing ourselves to certain outcomes that may suit our particular political, social, or personal makeup. Respondent validation of questionnaire responses through interviews, conducted with individuals and groups, during which I would often air their responses and allow for further comment, meant that, at least, there was always feedback on analysis. Also, I had easy access to the respondents, even socially, since we were housed in the same area of Kuwait and in some cases in the same buildings. I could therefore always take my findings to them for verification.

Whether a report is reliable or not is partly answered by the validity tests given above but must also involve asking the question *how objective is this research given that it is conducted by an insider researcher and participant observer?*

Eisner (1993) reaches his own conclusion on objectivity. Eisner argues that we should leave behind us the notion that we have to be objective. He advocates a kind of relativism which is linked to Bird et al's (1996) notion that what is true 'depends upon shared frameworks of perception and understanding' (Bird et al 1996 p21).

Phillips (1993), however, opposes this idea and claims that relativism leaves us in the sorry position of not being able to choose between competing empirical claims. He does not support the logic that relativism follows from an absence of data that can be said to be totally valid. He attempts to point out that not only is the concept of truth legitimate but so also is the concept of objectivity.



Bird et al (1996) in their critique of the argument between Eisner (1993) and Phillips (1993) see Eisner (1993) as criticizing 'naïve realism' (as opposed to objectivity) whereby all subjectivity is discounted. Phillips (1993) also rejects this notion. Furthermore, it is clear that the kind of relativism that Phillips (1993) rejects is an extreme kind of relativism.

In the final analysis Eisner's (1993) position reaffirms Toulmin's (1982) conclusion that we attempt to establish 'which of our positions are rationally warranted, reasonable or defensible - that is, well – founded rather than groundless opinions, sound *doxai* rather than shaky ones' (Toulmin, 1982 p115). Such an approach appears reasonable.

I can through the interpretative and ethnographic mode of research present my findings through the voices of my respondents, checking as far as possible for respondent validation and exploiting triangulation. Hence this research works within that understanding of objectivity and is not rooted in the positivist paradigm. It is phenomenological in approach.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To ensure that diverse opinion is offered (the reader can then make his/her own synthesis of the data) and to ensure that respondents are not constrained, offended or imposed upon, certain ethical considerations should be noted. Burgess (1985) advocates 'open as against closed or covert research' (Burgess 1985 p. 139). It is easy to see how a pre –supposed notion could be supported by a researcher who, covertly, attempts to uncover the kind of data that suits that pre – supposition.

Altrichter et al (1993) also discuss this anti – covert stance: 'Research,' they say, 'should be compatible with the educational aims of the situation' (Altrichter et al, 1993 p.77). In my research, since it is aimed at encouraging collaborative work, there should be no covert observation or even covert analysis of data. Transparency has been of utmost importance to me and generally my respondents have, some of them over a period of four to five years, respected this stance and have been happy to share their



ideas about the management of their centres as well as their feelings about mentoring trials. These authors also point to three main ethical criteria for qualitative research:

- Negotiation
- Confidentiality
- Participant Control

Regarding negotiation, I have found that all my fellow supervisors, apart from one, were open to allowing me to seek information from themselves and from the teachers at their sites. Two allowed me to informally visit their sites where, after thorough explanation of my goals, I was allowed to initiate peer mentoring trials with those teachers who had signed up for them. Teachers and supervisors were first approached by means of a letter which clearly explained the research aims and what I would expect of respondents. Those who wished to participate signed the attached pro – forma. Management of the training company had, when it was under the auspices of ELS, shown interest in the research and the Director of Studies had asked me to send him a report on my pilot research in 1999. When IPETQ took over the contract in September 2000, however, such openness to the research was not forthcoming. However, the new company did not forbid access to any of the sites. Nevertheless I realized that my research was no longer positively encouraged and I felt that research from now on would have to be considerably lower key.

Confidentiality became a critical factor from September 2000 since I was often receiving responses in questionnaire and in interview which were critical of the new management's approach. Since these respondents felt that I was not part of the locus of power attached to this new management they could voice their opinions to me, although they often requested anonymity. Burgess (1985) writes of 'informed consent' (Burgess 1985. p.148) which he uses to mean the consent required to ethically report data gathered from conversation, interview and questionnaire. There were a few of my respondents who felt they wished to state points of view which were not in line with the collaborative aims of the research nor with the majority



point of view within their workplace. I noticed that they were often reticent in their answers and these people had to be assured that their point of view was respected and that they would be anonymous in any future reporting of the interview.

With regard to participant control, there were instances when teachers mentioned that certain questions appeared 'loaded' and I realized that I would have to reflect on these questions in questionnaire and in interview. This led me to change Questionnaire Two to keep the questions always open – ended. I received no further comments on Questionnaire 3A, although several participants did not answer certain questions at all and this was their right. As the threads of findings, reported in Chapter Four of this dissertation, began to unravel I noticed that some participants also began to weary of the continuous process of having to report on collaboration and did not wish to continue as respondents. I note in Chapter Four that this may have been because of the lack of a facilitator at their sites who might maintain the freshness of their collaborative efforts. The need for such facilitation is one of my main findings.

Participants were given the opportunity to comment on their questionnaire answers in follow up interviews and to comment upon my final notes before writing up the research. I was aware that sometimes I was overstating their views, perhaps in an effort to reinforce my own action aims in the research. Two respondents who were at one of my own sites, the Military College, said after reading my draft of data and analysis that they were not exactly pro an organized peer mentoring system (as I had suggested in the draft). They preferred, they stated, an informal but continuous process of cooperation. In deference to their wishes, I had to change my conclusions.

I have, through reading Lomax (1994), continuously reminded myself of the moral element innate in action research. Referring to teacher researchers the author concludes that: 'They seek to transform their routine everyday practice into praxis, which is morally committed action' (Lomax, 1994, p.159).



However, perhaps because of the ethical element in trying to effect change. I became aware of a discussion that permeates recent writings on qualitative research. There is a questioning of the way in which we code qualitative data in an attempt to label it and make it easier to analyse. The suggestion by Gough and Scot, (2000) is that by creating coded categories we form a relationship between coding and analysis. That is to say that “the researcher brings to the research setting an ‘a priori’ construction of the social setting of the research which is considered to be privileged for one reason or another’ (Gough and Scot, 2000 p.2). They mention two distinct approaches to analysis. These are ‘code – and – retrieve’ and ‘emergence and interrogation of theory’. The thrust of their research is that 1) there is a danger in coding and 2) the emergence theory often tries to produce generalizable meaning outside of the immediate research context.

It is suggested that both approaches are often used in case studies. In a sense I require for my study a code that ‘facilitates both looking in and looking out, that is, would represent data in ways meaningful both to respondents and to the researcher’s professional peers .... so promoting .....links both within the data and between the data and the more abstract theoretical knowledge and principles’ (Gough and Scot, 2000 p.4 ).

As I gathered and analysed data I became aware of sometimes controlling the data. That is why, in Chapter Four of this research, I experiment in presenting, in juxtaposition, responses to questionnaire, interview, diary and note entries including personal reactions. In this way the data can speak for itself. Then finally I draw up a list of findings, hypotheses or theoretical stances which relate to the ‘emergent theory’ (Cf p. 145).

Gerdes and Conn (2001) outline the defining points of a qualitative research project and recommend peer debriefing where the researcher is debriefed by a third party who is familiar with the research but not directly involved. This, I can see, is useful for reflection and retaining or adjusting focus and I



had several people who belong to the Kuwait Post Graduate Study Society who were prepared to read my data and analysis.

The reading has also led me to thinking about teacher development arising out of respondents, who are colleagues and co-researchers in this study, carrying out qualitative research. Breidenstein (2002) suggests a viewpoint that I identified with increasingly as the research proceeded: 'I would suggest that qualitative research can be a metaphor for the process of qualitative teaching: teachers who are unaware of or resistant to the moral, political and personal dimensions of teaching may develop those dimensions by researching their own practice or the practice of others' (Breidenstein, 2002 p.1). Qualitative reporting and analysis can lead to a change of cognition which, in turn, can lead to positive and dynamic change in how we learn and how we teach.

### **Generalizability**

Qualitative research, particularly action research is highly pertinent to the setting it is carried out in. The whole argument for the use of insider researchers, participant observers, grounded theory and action research in an educational setting is that such research is to improve the praxis of teachers in that setting which will, hopefully improve the learning opportunity of the students in that setting.

My own view of the generalizability of this research is informed by Stake's (1978) argument that one can use a process called naturalistic generalization to apply findings from one research study to another similar situation. When put together with other studies of a similar nature, comparisons can be made and conclusions drawn that could be applied to another similar situation. Yet, although this study has been conducted in four different sites of IPETQ EFL training institution, at the British Council and at an international school, it is still difficult to say that results from such a multi-site study can be applied to another setting around the world. There is the cultural aspect of research conducted in Kuwait and then there are the many institutional cultural aspects of any training company or school that are not



readily transferable to other contexts. There are, however, certain aspects about this research which might allow for naturalistic generalization. First, it is the cooperation between many international trainers and teachers that was under consideration. The experience and educational backgrounds of these teachers, who have worked collectively in many corners of the earth, are not confined to Kuwait or the Middle East. Furthermore, these teachers will take their experience of this research with them to other parts of the world. Secondly, the comparative element utilized in this research means that there will be common elements around the world in such institutions for ESP training, EFL teacher training and schools that use English as a medium for teaching children.

Some of the common denominators are:

- The English language itself
- British Council schools are centralized in London and their teacher training programmes are centralized through the RSA Celta training
- International Schools are inspected and accredited by international bodies with sets of criteria
- EFL training companies often use international exams such as City and Guilds to validate their training
- Teachers are trained and certified by nationally and internationally accepted criteria

Hence the notion of naturalistic generalization is especially applicable to this research.

### **The instruments of research have been:**

1. Questionnaire for IPETQ Supervisors. Open-ended questionnaire to establish whether supervisors at the other three sites are aware of collaborative work at their sites.
2. Letter and questionnaire for IPETQ teachers requesting response with brief description of the type of research being undertaken and what was meant by peer mentoring.
3. 3A and 3B. Open - ended questionnaires, revised forms of Questionnaire 2, for those teachers in IPETQ who wanted to respond, asking them to pinpoint examples of collaboration work. I modified this questionnaire to change peer mentoring to collaboration. Also I alluded to the cycle of possible problem /discussion /action/ reflection thus building reflective action into the consideration of the respondent. I also attempted to keep the questions as open - ended as possible in response to several teachers' comments that one question, asked previously, was 'loaded'.
4. A form for occasional use by respondents for noting instances of collaborative work – collected and analysed every month. This was used in all three settings.
5. Researcher's form for notetaking whilst interviewing respondents from each site.
6. Analysis of student tests from Military College.
7. Letter to RSA Celta explaining the rationale behind my research and requesting access to certain practical sessions. This letter had a pro-forma attached to it on which respondents could consent to observation.



8. Notebook containing thick description of ideas emanating from respondents, RSA tutors, supervisors and myself at IPETQ, British Council and the International School.
9. Diary: occasional notes on direction to be taken / reflection after observation or discussion.
10. Questionnaire given to RSA trainee teachers after completion of course on April 11 2001
11. Questionnaire given to teachers at the International School between 2001 and 2003.

The instruments for research match the ethnographic approach of seeking viewpoints, observing and recording events as they happen, reflecting on and perhaps adjusting hypotheses. Reflexivity and action research both allow for such observation accompanied by or followed by note - taking.

# Chapter Four

## Findings and Interpretation

In this chapter I intend to present the data that I have collected from the various settings, to reflect on sections of that data in the light of the research questions and to interpret meanings according to qualitative and interpretative stances outlined in Chapter Three.

I will present the research tools and findings in three parts:

**Part One:** Research tools and which research questions they were applied to.

**Part Two:** A review of supervisor, teacher and student responses to early investigations with some limited quantitative data.

**Part Three:** Thick description containing interpretation and analysis of answers for each of the six research questions set out at the end of Chapter Two and repeated below.

- **Q.1** To what extent does peer mentoring affect the continuous learning of teachers ?
- **Q.2** To what extent does peer mentoring affect subject knowledge (in this case EFL)?
- **Q.3** How does peer mentoring affect the quality of teaching?
- **Q.4** How does peer mentoring affect curriculum development and building?
- **Q.5** How does peer mentoring affect the way teachers respond to change ?
- **Q.6** How do peer mentoring trials affect the role of teachers?



## Part One. Research tools.

The research tools are listed in the order they were presented in Chapter Three and are matched to the research questions which they affect.

**Table 4.1 Research tools matched to research questions**

Research Tools	Research Questions
1. Questionnaire for IPETQ supervisors	Question 5 Collaboration and change Question 6 Implications for teacher role
2. and 3 Letter and Questionnaire for IPETQ teachers	Questions 1 and 3. Teacher learning and quality of teaching
4. Form for occasional use at all three centres for teacher to report examples of collaboration	Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 Teacher learning, quality of teaching, subject knowledge and curriculum
5. Form for researcher's notes during /after informal interviews	All questions
6. Analysis of student tests from Military College	Question 2, and 3 Improved quality of teaching
7. Letter to RSA trainees and pro forma requesting permission to observe	Question 1 and 6 Affecting RSA course only
8. Researcher's Notebook	Affecting all questions
9. Researcher's Diary	All questions
10. Questionnaire on benefits of collaboration given end of RSA course	Question 1, 2, 3 and 6
11. Questionnaire on quality of collaboration at the International School and other first EFL teaching settings	All questions

Between 1999 and 2001, I issued questionnaires and pro formas to supervisors and teachers and examined results of tests. I also interviewed supervisors, teachers, and trainers to discover what collaboration, if any, was in place at their worksites. Not all of these research tools were utilized in all three main settings but below a cross - section of different kinds of enquiry, with my interpretation of the meaning of results emanating from them, are presented.

Method and results can be outlined in a certain order. First the IPETQ setting is investigated then the RSA Celta, then the International School.

**Part Two. Early responses from supervisors, teachers and students.**

**a. IPETQ Supervisor responses**

Questionnaires (See Appendix 1A and 1B) containing open ended questions were issued to three supervisors, two at Qatar St and one at Joint Command. The Naval School had been temporarily closed at this time (October 2000). It was hoped the answers would give insights into whether or not collaboration was in operation at any of the sites. The questions and answers are laid out in the table below.

**Table 4.2. Responses to IPETQ Supervisor Questionnaires**

Question	Reply Naval College	Reply Mil. Coll.	Reply JCSC	Reply Qatar St
Do teachers / supervisors collaborate in planning?	Void	Yes Researcher is supervisor	Yes attempts at this but informal chats	No
Collaboration in teaching?	Void.	Yes. Team teaching.	Individual approach to teaching, but collaboration for planning	No. Too busy.
Collaboration in curriculum / materials?	Void.	Yes	Yes in teams of two.	Occasionally for extra materials, never for main course

The following table presents my interpretative results for the same questions after informal interview of respondents



**Table 4.3 Interpretation of IPETQ Supervisor Responses**

Question	Reply Naval College	Reply Mil Coll	Reply JCSC	Reply Qatar St
Collaborate in planning?	Now know from later interview informal collaboration in all areas as site started up again	Researcher's site encouraged peer assistance in pairs and group planning.	This site created own materials. Informal approach to collaboration in curriculum and planning	Type of curriculum and no time given as main cause for no collaboration
Collaborate in teaching?	New teachers assisted in preparing lessons.	Team teaching encouraged mainly because of size of class but also attempt to create peer mentoring ethos	Normally one teacher, one class specialist.	Teaching 5/6 lessons a day. No opportunity
Collaborate in curriculum?	More an induction process.	One person asked to coordinate extra materials. The teachers 'owned' all the material. Always collaborated.	Teacher ownership. But each person had own area. However annual review involved all teachers.	Some attempt but emphasis on covering the book for the 2 weekly test.
During informal interviews with the supervisor.	Teachers collaborated in breaks, informally.	(My own centre)	Collaboration in evidence – but was initial and informal.	Made to feel that collaboration was superfluous

I noted the following insights into answers:

- Certain curricula are so prescriptive that they do not encourage collaborative input
- Such curricula do not provoke thought on the part of the teacher and do not encourage ownership of the curriculum
- Only one supervisor (at Qatar St.) from five did not wish to change the situation or develop new attitudes to the curriculum. A second supervisor at Qatar St. was new and was keeping a low profile showing no commitment either way
- In April 2001 a person was appointed to Qatar St to write extra materials especially for listening. Did this mean a new approach was being taken? Had this action research prompted some action in that direction?
- At other sites there was evidence of some collaborative work, but on an occasional and informal basis.

These conclusions pointed to the fact that there was a starting point for collaborative work since only one supervisor seemed to be opposed to it.

#### **b.The Questionnaire for teachers.**

Teachers were initially sent a letter in 2000 explaining the research goals and inviting them to respond. Four at the Military College, two at the JCSC, and two at Qatar Street responded by pin pointing examples of collaborative work and how their own experience was used to contribute to the Professional Development of the team (see Appendices 2 and 3A). Responses from all three sites operating at the time indicated that there were examples of collaborative work but this collaboration had been mainly ‘ad - hoc’ or ‘informal’. There were exceptions, however, with two at my own site, the Military College, and two at the Joint Command Staff College showing, at some length, how they used former experience. One had been a town planner and used his developed map reading skills to co-plan and deliver, with a young teacher, fresh out of College, a lesson to eight Kuwaiti majors on English for Map Reading. The ex - town planner was able to draw some excellent maps for the young teacher. She then shared with him



her strategies for putting over the language with which, fresh off a PGCE Modern Languages course, she was much more familiar.

Interpretation of main results indicated that:

- Even at Qatar St. (with the prescriptive curriculum) some informal feedbacking and ad-hoc discussion occurred
- For new teachers, those colleagues who were familiar with teaching Arabic speakers and in a Military environment were regarded as most useful
- Previous experience was noted as useful both by those who had a particular experience and those who collaborated, even informally, with them
- Reflection did happen according to respondents but it may not have been the sort of reflection – in - action related to the cycle that Kolb(1984) suggests can be highly creative.

A modified form was issued to the above respondents for occasional use (see Appendix 3B). Instructions were issued to fill in the form as and when teachers were aware of achieving collaborative work. One of these forms was completed by John who had previously responded from Qatar St (Appendix 2) but had now moved to J.C.S.C. I was interested to note any development.

I was careful to change peer mentoring (which had been on the original letter/form) to collaborative work, since instructors would prefer vocabulary which they more readily understood, particularly before I had the chance to explain the language of peer mentoring. These refinements were sometimes necessary in the process of this action research.

Main interpretations of the completed forms were:

- In the case of the person who had changed site specific examples were given of how he had been collaborating with colleagues at Joint Command (eg in formulation of tests) where the curriculum was not so specific or prescriptive and where the supervisor was open to collaborative techniques such as peer mentoring
- This led me to strengthen my opinion that a curriculum which the teachers create (including the testing of that curriculum) creates more collaborative work, and engenders more enthusiasm
- Specific experiences, some brought from recent teaching some from former walks of life, improved preparation of classes and teaching. One teacher who was in the US Airforce was a useful resource (at JCSC) for military terminology and for insights into the military culture
- At Qatar street an interesting dyad (team of two) of teachers worked together regularly. One who had been, at various times in her life, mother and housewife, an interpreter, a manager of an island resort off the Gold Coast in Australia and a university teacher seemed to use her adaptability and flexibility to help a younger teacher. The latter however was able to share methods for positive rapport with the students which, in this test-driven environment, in her own words, 'is vital for survival.' (reported in Research Diary Feb 12 2001)

#### Results from the quantitative form for teachers.

This form (Cf Appendix 4) was issued to twenty four teachers between 2001 and 2002, requesting them to tick when some form of collaborative peer mentoring occurred and if possible offer explanations for them. The attempt at a quantitative probe was not, in my opinion, very successful. I became aware that teachers may not have had the time or opportunity to respond in a fashion that could be quantified or qualified into an emergent theory. However, the few results from seven respondents (based at four sites) who returned the form were:

- The instructors / teachers only filled in the forms when they had time off so results may not have been always accurate or precise



- It was clear that there was a great deal of informal collaboration in the centres that responded
- A focused approach came from two experienced peer mentors who had cooperated with me in early trials, one at the Naval College the other at Joint Command and Staff College. These respondents entered less ticks (representing collaborative activities) and wrote more detailed explanation of focused activities.

### **c. Student Outcomes**

Results of an early survey of students at the Naval School (Cf Chapter One p.5) had indicated that lessons resulting from peer mentoring met with positive response. In addition to this, an attempt was made to relate student results to peer-mentoring trials at the Military College in 2001. Results were examined for a group/platoon (size numbers, at this time, down from sixty to forty one as students dropped out of the course) considered to be 'average' by those who taught it. I and my immediate team looked at three sets of results which were recorded over a six month period when a certain amount of team-teaching, splitting of classes, remedial work and peer mentoring approaches had been introduced. An analysis, drawn up by one of my peer mentors, is shown in Appendix 6

The main interpretations of results were:

- 15 of the 41 students remained constant or made progress in monthly tests
- 28 students who sat the most recent end - of - course test had a higher result than in the initial assessment
- Despite the above there was a great deal of fluctuation in the results which suggested other problems – one of which might have been linked to the timetable which allowed for huge gaps in training (when students received no English lessons). The students, therefore, could easily forget what they had learned.

Now that the peer mentoring was more firmly in place, we expected to monitor more closely. in future research, whether there might be improvement in student performance. My own circumstances changed.

however. A new supervisor took over at The Military College and he returned the team to a rigid company policy of procedure.

#### **d. The RSA Celta EFL Teacher Training**

Of fourteen participants on this course the eight respondents allowed me to attend practical sessions – which could be peer planning or team – teaching or feedback from peer observation. The method of conducting the course has been described in the setting for this research outlined in Chapter One. Because of restrictions in time I selected four respondents; two were already teachers of other subjects at secondary schools in Kuwait, one was an Engineer and the other had been a secretary and was presently a housewife. I attended eight three hour sessions in all with one attendance approximately every two weeks. Each evening I attended I attempted to view some planning, some teaching (sitting with peer observers at the rear of the classroom) and some feedback from one of my four respondents to other trainees. Because I was a silent observer and was not permitted to engage in any conversation with trainees, all I could do was to take notes on interactions.

From these notes the salient points were:

- Collaborative work was definitely encouraged during the RSA Celta course – in planning, in peer observation and in peer feedback
- The reflective cycle, such as Kolb (1984) promulgates, was in place
- Trainees evidently reflected on assessments, critique and peer feedback
- The feedback was attended by the course – tutors who were the assessors. This appeared *to block easy communication*
- Collaborative feedback deteriorated into certain trainees becoming negative in tone whilst critiquing each other. The ‘attitude seemed to be *tit-for-tat*’ (Cf diary 12 April 2001)
- The peer mentoring was thought to be *monologic* (Cf: page 31) in nature. This may be because of the presence of the assessors and the fear of assessment



- The course tutor constantly reminded trainees that ‘this is the way the RSA course does it’ (Diary April 3 2001). The researcher is of the opinion that the course was somewhat ‘doctrinal’ and did not encourage *dialogic* peer coaching.

After the course I was able to access respondents with an open - ended questionnaire (see Appendix 10) and seek opinions on the quality of collaborative work during the course and whether or not the new EFL teachers would like to continue this collaborative approach in their first jobs. Six of the fourteen were able to respond in time. This group of six included my four selected teachers, whose progress I was able to follow to some extent after the course.

To the questions outlined in Appendix 10, the six answers followed this pattern:

**Table 4.4 Analysis of Six Responses to RSA Teacher Questionnaire**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Wholly agree</b>	<b>Partially agree</b>	<b>Don't agree</b>
How valuable was input from peers?	4 teachers: taken overall very helpful	2 teachers: at times negative feedback	
Did you use your former experience in peer work?	3 teachers felt they guided inexperienced people	3 teachers: could have been used-not really asked for	
Did the former experience of others help you?	3 teachers: especially from former teachers	3 teachers: only sometimes	
Would you want a system of peer observation in first EFL environment?	2 teachers: under certain conditions	2 teachers: from time to time when a problem came up	2 teachers: not at all. It was a harrowing experience

- This table indicates that only one third of the respondents wanted to participate in a similar collaborative environment. However I could add, after interviewing the two negative respondents on April 12, 2001 this

was chiefly because the course was highly intensive and the fear of not passing was always present

- Reactions to collaboration on the course were good, despite several emotional incidents which I witnessed (Researcher Notes April 4, 2001 ): Kathy said: ‘That’s enough! this is too negative. I wasn’t negative with any of you. I’m going home!’ At the end of the course, when all but one had passed, most felt it had been very useful. Kathy’s reply was symptomatic of a certain nervousness which permeated the group and which could easily spill over into anger.
- It was my interpretation that the collaboration/mentoring between tutors and trainees was monologic in nature and that set the tone for further trainee peer feedback. The true dialogic nature of reciprocal mentoring was not encountered during my eight attendances at planning stages and feedbacks. Truly open learning and discovery are associated with a dialogic kind of interaction. The monologic aspect arose out of the type of course the RSA Celta is. Although it encourages peer collaboration the outcomes must agree with the rather prescriptive philosophy behind the course. This discussion on monologic and dialogic mentoring is developed under the Concepts and Literature section of this report in Chapter 2, p.31.

#### **e. The International School.**

Upon joining the school in November 2001 I was immediately asked to undertake curriculum change and to lead a team for whole school change of the Social Studies curriculum. Although involving extra work it appeared an excellent opportunity to peer mentor with others using English as a medium for teaching. I also hoped to collect useful data on whether or not change could be effectively carried out. When I had been working with the team for three months I issued a revised form of the questionnaire I had given to IPETQ trainers. The emphasis was on how the teachers involved in the change viewed collaborative work within the school and whether or not they thought the curriculum change would be successful (see Appendix 11). The following were my conclusions from six responses coupled with my early impressions taken from meetings.



- All six were happy to have the opportunity to change the curriculum since they explained that Social Studies topics (for example Ancient History) had previously been taught without linear planning. Different year teachers were covering the same topics
- Four were very concerned at the standards of English within the school, especially since they were using English as the medium for teaching and the school was seeking accreditation from the USA
- Five thought that our Social Studies team should work closely with the EFL Department to order good materials for teaching English and to structure the teaching of English as a Foreign Language throughout the school, from Kindergarten to Grade 12
- Two were fairly content with their teaching lot and thought management, though not easy to deal with, were OK as long as ‘you keep your head down’ ( diary notes 17 November 2001)
- Four thought that management were the main cause of discontent within the school since management blamed teachers for indiscipline throughout the school and showed no support for their international teaching staff but appeared ‘to let the Arabic Staff away with anything’ (diary 21 November 2001). Five thought that the discipline throughout the school was very poor but especially in the upper school. One thought that it was no worse than in other Kuwaiti schools and that teachers simply had to be tough with students. Two others told this teacher in one of our meetings not to tell others how to manage their discipline, since she was lucky to have small classes of younger girls who were much more respectful than the older boys
- Five thought that the school was taking all the children rejected (for reasons of discipline amongst others) by other schools and the sole interest of management was in making money
- Four were in favour of peer mentoring through visiting each others’ classes and feedbacking to the curriculum group.



From these initial results I could see that there was enthusiasm on the part of teachers to enhance the curriculum and, if time allowed, to observe each other and provide feedback. I also recognised that there were underlying problems with discipline and with the management. Discipline was regarded as a top priority issue by most teachers. Furthermore I had taken over from two teachers who between them had lasted only months at the school. I hoped that a better – constructed curriculum would change management, staff and students and bring about better motivation and better discipline throughout the school.

### **Evaluation of early research.**

Certain main outcomes were already beginning to formulate. These related directly to the six research questions outlined in Chapter Two, which are repeated on page 77 of this chapter.

- Examples in replies pointed to the fact that former experience was varied and was used to effect better strategies for teaching
- Observed lessons at the RSA course showed that teachers were reflecting on practice and on skills presented by peers. I personally witnessed the excellent effect of a well planned and executed lesson several times. The learning outcome at the Military College indicated slight improvement in student results during peer mentoring trials. (See Appendix 6). Other factors (Cf: p.84) may have affected the lack of a marked improvement
- Research in IPETQ centres established that those lessons planned and executed involving teachers using former non – teaching expertise in conjunction with others who had strong strategies eg for putting over the target language, were of high quality
- The management of the company was hierarchical, bureaucratic in style and traditional in stance. This affected teamwork and my own ability to initiate wider peer mentoring. Certain managers and supervisors were unwilling to change policies, curricula or strategies of teaching
- Trainee teachers (RSA) generally benefited from collaborative work but were wary of getting involved again. This was linked, particularly for non native speakers, to a fear of being assessed



- Experienced EFL teachers were happy, in trials, to share their total experience of life. But there were isolated incidents when an experienced person simply looked to personal needs
- The responsibilities of leadership could be transferred to teachers when they could prove, as in these trials, that the team was self sufficient, skilled and motivated to achieve positive change through peer mentoring
- School - wide curriculum change requires empowering teachers and facilitation of a learning environment.

Future research at this point indicated the usefulness of

- Closer, more detailed studies of daily peer mentoring interaction
- Following two RSA respondents into their workplace and linking training to practice
- Examining the relationship between types of curriculum and teacher peer mentoring
- Noting the experiences of non - native speakers of EFL with regard to peer mentoring
- Establishing whether there is a link between *monologic* / *dialogic* forms of mentoring and appraisal / fear of appraisal.

I found that systems of appraisal constituted one of the most highly contentious areas. Observation and critique (even though intended to be positive) could also be harrowing experiences. On the RSA course there were serious reservations about allowing oneself to be critiqued so closely and in one pro-forma return from an IPETQ respondent the research itself was seen to be dangerous. in so far as it advocated changes which might 'rock the boat'.

### **Part Three. Analysis of the Six Research Questions.**

The six research questions are now examined within the interpretative paradigm using thick description of interview comments mixed with questionnaire responses and diary entries. This descriptive approach includes some further insight into early outcomes (1999-2001) and continues to describe and discuss outcomes of the research up to May 2003. As each question is examined, results from the six sites will be presented in the same sequence as they were introduced in Chapter One: Naval School, Military College, JCSC, Qatar Street, British Council and International School. It should be noted, however, that there are questions that relate more to one research site than to others and therefore the findings from that particular site are dealt with in more depth

#### **Question 1. To what extent does peer mentoring affect the learning of teachers ?**

Questionnaire responses (Cf Appendices 2, 3A and 3B) returned by teachers and instructors in October 2002, and matched with other returns (1999 to 2003) indicated a positive reply to this question in so far as a greater percentage of teachers felt that they learn from their colleagues. Yet the replies also indicated that close to fifty per cent of them felt that this happened on an informal basis. Some even suggested it was only at coffee breaks that teachers communicated and indeed, at one site of the MOD, Qatar Street, this was to be expected because most teachers taught six sessions in succession. On a normal day, instructors did not meet except at coffee break or until the last thirty minutes of the day. At the other sites of the MOD, however, there was much more time to plan, to reflect and discuss and there were opportunities for teachers to go into each others' classes or at least to plan and to discuss their practice together. The distribution of responses are shown in Table 4.5 which indicates the number of respondents at each of the six teaching locations used in the research, and whether or not they were able to carry out peer mentoring.



**Table 4.5 Differences in ethos and opportunity for collaboration at each site 2001 - 2002.**

<b>Setting</b>	<b>No. of responses 2001.</b>	<b>No. of responses 2002.</b>	<b>Ethos</b>
MOD Naval School	4	4	Time available/instructors create and reinvent curriculum and teach in collaborative manner. Supervisor a passive enabler of professional development
MOD Military College	6	4	Highly variable timetable but days when instructors have planning/curriculum time Supervisor not pro change
MOD JCSC	5	5	Variable timetable/not all teachers working at same time/ Months when not teaching/ Supervisor actively encourages peer mentoring
MOD Qatar Street	4	3	No-time/restrictive curriculum Highly bureaucratic/top down management
Ex - British Council trainees	8	4	Two at British Council feedback and observe when they can. Two in international schools. One of these finds no ethos of sharing.
Int. school	8	5	Very little time. No ethos of sharing/ curriculum change did not empower the teachers

The above table indicates that the number of respondents had reduced in most locations. This reduction was linked directly to the fact that many EFL teachers remain at post for only two to three years before moving on.

As the research developed there was much more focused attention upon a few representative teachers who did not tire in responding and who were open to a process of continuous feedback with me. At The British Council in 2001, for example, the RSA trainees only had to respond to questionnaire and interview. During 2002 and 2003, follow up visits to schools were more difficult to carry out and not all of the original eight respondents went straight into teaching EFL. At the international school the number of respondents fell due to people leaving the school and two leaving Kuwait.

There have however, been sufficient respondents and a fairly representative response from each location. Moreover, some respondents at the MOD sites were new and others moved from one site to another within the four years of main research (1999-2003). Their comments should help, all the same, to create insights into any *process* of peer mentoring over four years and, in the case of those who have moved site, into comparative elements at different sites.

The questionnaire comments, sometimes confirmed or sometimes altered after interview, indicate a picture relating to research question one that can again be framed in a table:

**4.6 Table indicating extent of peer mentoring at each of the six sites**

Centre/Location	Teacher learning through mentoring	Explanation
MOD Naval School	3 from 4 fully : the other partially	Relaxed situation : no real attempt to work at system of collaboration
MOD Military College	3 from 4 especially on curriculum	Many difficult variables Most exchange ideas. No attempt by present management to facilitate team sharing.
MOD Joint Command and Staff College	4 from 5 agree fully. One partially	Highly prestigious centre. Supervisor aids teamwork. Time available for reflection
MOD Qatar St.	None fully.	No attempt by management to alter present prescriptive system
British Council Ex RSA Celta in first jobs	3 from 4. One of those to a limited degree	Except for one setting others encourage buddy systems
International School	None. (Previously 5 from 6 when building curriculum)	Management have no desire to effect real curriculum change Autocratic and threatening environment



From the above tables we can see immediately that the two centres where there was little or no facilitation of peer mentoring were Qatar Street( MOD) and the international school. The international school faced criticism from 2001 to 2003 for its lack of facilitation of real change. Qatar Street was noted in reports from teachers from 1999 to 2003 as having a hierarchical management structure and a prescriptive curriculum. It also insisted on a test of prescriptive chapters every two weeks and therefore, was test - driven. Certain teachers had previously reported in the past to have considered their teaching circumstances good at Qatar St, since little thought and therefore little accountability was expected. As Antony put it:

*'It is a page - turning exercise. You teach your six lessons then you're out of there at 1-30pm. It's just a question of teaching up to the next test. I don't mind it.'*

### **Naval School**

Replies from the Naval School were positive about learning. I had myself introduced peer mentoring strategies at that centre when I was a supervisor there from 1997 to early 2000 as part of my MA Ed work and in pilot trials for research on mentoring. My feeling upon interviewing informally the supervisor there (in 2002) was that there was always collaboration between the small team but that this was not really 'systematic'. The more systematic response came from Dan, one of my former peer mentors. Some replies from others who were not at the base from 1997 to 2000 indicated that they considered a less systematic or less focussed form of collaboration to be peer mentoring.

Dan, from the Naval School wrote in answer to Questions 1 and 2 of Appendix 2 questionnaire (November 13 2002):

**Peer mentoring is encouraged. Collaborative work is needed to complete ESP materials. On several occasions experienced and inexperienced teachers have coached or tutored each other into selecting appropriate material for a particular class.**

The same instructor answered Question 4 of the teacher questionnaire, concerning peer observation and feedback, with a detailed account of what I could call a process of peer mentoring.

**Yes. On two occasions recently I have been observed on a ‘non-threatening’ basis for two full class periods. During the feedback session afterwards I was advised to 1. Avoid task overload. 2. Reduce cognitive overload 3. Elide more appropriately 4. Use more spatial - visual material to elicit vocabulary usage 5. Emphasise auditory discrimination strategies. Because of these specific pointers I was able to use the advice and actually have noticed improved student learning because of it.**

### **Military College**

The Military College, where there are many variables (listed in Chapter 1 p.6) and where I had also been a supervisor from 2000 to 2001 and initiated a peer mentoring approach, was a centre from which there were strong positive replies on teamwork for curriculum development, use of former experience and team teaching. Here, however, the continued facilitation of *focused* peer interaction (after 2001) was questionable.

James replied in October 2002 to question 4 on incidences of peer observation of classes and feedback:

**A very little – but it was very valuable in seeing class response to teacher approaches**

Then, on whether the company or centre management facilitated teacher learning and professional development, the same respondent added:

**Professional development is encouraged at the centre, yet self-motivation is the determining factor.**

When interviewed at the end of October 2002 and asked to expand on what he wrote, James commented:

*‘The overall management of the company have never really encouraged relevant professional development but at our site we have sufficient common*



*sense to rely on each other and it is the ethos at our centre to plan curriculum changes and tests together. My own experience of Early Middle English has helped to produce vocabulary and meanings that may well form a bedrock for TEFL. '*

## JCSC

Although the instructors at this site spent a long period of time not teaching (nearly half the year) they still found it almost impossible to visit each other's classrooms when they were teaching because of lack of cover staff. Yet John, a graphic designer with many transferable skills to offer within ESP at this centre, believed that he would only want to observe and feedback with maturer teachers. In interview in May 2002 he stated:

*You know x, for example, – she's so young and inexperienced – what have I got to learn from her? I doubt whether these colonels and brigadiers respect her either.*

I noted in the diary:

'x was one of the group of respondents I had asked two years ago to deliberately collaborate whenever they could over a period of three weeks. I had then interviewed them as a group. I noticed that she was one of the most positive of the group when it came to teacher learning. Utilizing her recent PGCE, she had been able to offer insights into strategies for putting over the lessons to older experienced people transferring skills from former jobs in town planning and marketing.'

Malcolm used the internet regularly as a source for materials and found that he could access a host of graphs, pictures and military hardware which he could not obtain even from the specialist military magazine, called *Jane*. All respondents from every teaching centre and school affirmed that the worldwide web provides opportunities for resources, sharing of ideas and even specific lesson plans.

At the Joint Command and Staff College, the English Language Unit was a prestigious unit, if only because it catered to high ranking officers of the



Kuwaiti joint services. British Army officers were also on hand to provide the more explicit military training. In this centre there were many examples of collaborative work. Since they taught for approximately half of the year and the other half they spent assessing their impact and creating new materials, they had the time and the professional impetus to share their skills. Yet in this environment there had been certain instructors that had not automatically fitted in. These were people placed in that environment for what might be called, in Management of Education terms, micro - political reasons. Some of them were removed at the request of the students. Malcolm remarked in interview in January 2003:

*'We all pull together here in an attempt to please the brigadiers, colonels and majors in our classes. Often their joint response to teaching affects the success of our operation. Even the Colonel here in charge of the centre cannot defend an instructor against the wishes of his/her trainees. It is imperative that we share the input, use all our skills and adapt continuously to the needs of the classes. Some have not been able to fit in to that schema and look what happened to them.'*

My notes following that interview record my impressions:

*'Malcolm is clear in his perception of what happens. He has been at this site for four to five years now. He is a former town planner himself. For personal reasons he has travelled and taught. I have observed over the four years how he has both given of his expertise and been ready to learn from younger, perhaps more linguistically inclined instructors.'*

Furthermore, an excerpt from an interview with Steve (January 2002) reads as follows:

*'Here we share all skills, avidly using up previous knowledge and know-how, in the preparation of our classes and in the post mortems on how they went. We share particularly well in the planning of new curriculum. Our jobs depend upon how well we deliver.'*

Interestingly, I had always kept a close eye on this site, since as Supervisor at the Military College from 2000 to 2001 I had worked nearby. I used to



visit and try to encourage peer mentoring approaches and I would have feedback sessions. Responses varied from the centre. One was reported in my research diary for 12 May 2001:

‘Donald wrote an interesting response to Question 8 of the questionnaire in that he, a man in his mid fifties, believes an EFL teacher should have learnt a foreign language *well* as part of his/her background if not specific training. In this way he raises a debate central to the effectiveness of peer mentoring. Do certain teachers have a better language background than others?’

Donald had written in early May, 2002:

**I find the EFL/ESP world somewhat disappointing. There are any number of teachers who enjoy the animation side of the job, the classroom contact, but few question explanations or terminology or have any idea of grammatical analysis. They are, in short, thoroughly uncritical. If this is so, it is most probably because they have never themselves been confronted with the business of learning a foreign language to a high degree of competence. Is it not bare - faced arrogance to set oneself up to teach skills which one is incapable of mastering oneself?**

My diary for May 23 2002 records:

‘Obviously if some teachers regard themselves as an elite then sharing of ideas could become a tense experience. Because the insider researcher is fully involved in reacting to data, I am aware in this research that there are two main camps. There are those that regard themselves as animators and for whom pedagogical aspects are most important and those who are grammatically and syntactically more sensitive to the subject. My own conclusion, however, is that sharing and collaborative work becomes all the more important because of this.’

## **Qatar St.**

One respondent, Pat, replied (9 Sept 2002) to question 1 (Cf Appendix 2) concerning facilitation of collaborative work:

**No. If anything, our centre actively discourages interaction between staff, due to the nature of the syllabus**

To the same question Maureen, also of Qatar Street, replies (10 September 2002):

**No. I was told by my DOS when I arrived that ‘we expect you to already know how to teach. So we don’t give you any training.’**

My own reaction to the last respondent’s reply was that she had not understood question one, which did not really mention any specific training being offered by the company. Therefore, in interview on 11 September 2002, I followed up by explaining what I meant by the question. The instructor then expounded on her ideas:

*‘The teachers share ideas or techniques for games to play in the last lesson. But we never share ideas on teaching standard lessons. Maybe we’re set in our teaching ways or don’t want to lose face by asking for help.’*

The majority, however, disliked such a monotonous existence but had no choice in the matter since the management prescribed it. At times, however, between 2001 and 2003 there had been a move to

- improve listening exercises that go with this course
- introduce some kind of mentoring/buddy system

The first task, as is reported in post -interview notes (12 March 2001) with three Qatar St. teachers, was allocated to a non-teacher who did not have any experience of the old listening lessons but had transcripts. He also went about his task with extremely limited contact with those who were teaching the book and the old listening exercises.



The company sent out letters in 2001 encouraging a buddy system or mentoring approach. The idea may have come from earlier interest in my attempts to introduce peer mentoring into the company when ELS was running the company – but is very different to what I had proposed. This present system would mean more experienced teachers at the site helping out new arrivals for the first few weeks. Despite lack of non – teaching time at Qatar Street, the newcomers were to be gradually inducted in the first few weeks. This, however, is what one new Qatar St. respondent, David, reports in questionnaire 2 November 2002:

**I personally sat with two teachers in my first week. There was, however no real collaboration. I watched the lesson then I left. There was no feedback or schedule assigned. One Egyptian teacher once translated some of the words in the students' book into Arabic for me.**

Later, in interview, David elaborated and he is noted as saying:

*'In my experience (limited as it may be) I have found that generally EFL companies and even many schools in Egypt and Kuwait are less interested in teacher learning and collaboration than simply making money – which is rather a contradiction in terms, I believe.'*

Maureen also stated in late 2002 that :

*There really isn't any instructor learning or training of any kind. However I understand that it's a business and they're concerned with profits. Spending time and money on my development would only benefit them if I stay for years.*

After this interview I reflected in the research diary (Oct 15<sup>th</sup> 2002): :

*'How much do they need to invest? Could it not happen the other way round? Might they not lose people because they don't value their development?'*

### **The British Council**

At the British Council Centre in Kuwait two of the ex RSA Celta trainees, whose training I had previously monitored, found jobs at the Council's



teaching centre. One, Anne, first became a primary teacher at the International School where we became colleagues before she left to join the British Council. The other, Philomena, joined the Council's own school immediately after training. Two others, non –native speakers, one Indian, Sanjula, and one Columbian, Maria, are presently teaching in Indian international schools in Kuwait which use English as the medium of instruction. I followed Philomena and Anne into class twice and asked how they co-planned and fed back on certain lessons. The first visit was interesting in so far as it indicated collaborative work and team teaching even though the two teachers said it did not happen unless they planned it and received permission from their line supervisor. On my second visit I remarked how much time they had spent on co - analysing each other's plans for the coming week's lessons with young learners.

Only one actually used the internet for lesson planning. Sandy, an ex – RSA trainee but not one that I had particularly observed, was at the British Council teaching centre and stated in interview in January 2003:

*'We use it all the time here and have a network of users throughout the British Council worldwide, sharing strategies and techniques and ideas that have worked in settings throughout the world.'*

Anne shared her enthusiasm for going over to the British Council where there was a system of support and professionalism. She could relate in interview on 3 June 2002:

*'Our syllabus is set down here but the curriculum within that syllabus is flexible. That's why we learn so much from each other because we all make extra worksheets and I have found a partner who, like me, is always looking for ideas to make classes more interesting and more effective. We go through our plans together. That is vital. Once we have active plans the lessons always seem to go well. Then, if we can, we go into each other's class even for 15 minutes and we discuss the results afterwards. I think we learn a lot this way and what's more we are enjoying it.'*



As for the other two ex RSA teachers that had been trained at the British Council, I was able to follow Sanjula in to her first job as assistant teacher of English at a national school in Kuwait which used English as the medium for teaching. Sanjula first asked permission for me to come in. Her headmistress was very willing and assisted me in every way to view EFL lessons that morning.

I was able to write in the diary entry for October 25 2001 that:

‘This school is at the lower end of the private school market for Kuwait. Sanjula doesn’t get paid a great deal. She is Indian and works with an all - Indian staff. However there is an obvious desire on the part of management and staff to help each other and learn from each other. There is no formal peer mentoring system in place but the headmistress (also Indian) has invited me in to give a talk on peer mentoring.’

Sanjula also reported in interview on 12 January 2003:

*‘I regard my training at the British Council as very tough and very good. I get a lot of respect here because I followed that course. We share ideas at the school especially on in- service days. It is not the peer observation – peer feedback system that we were taught but I don’t think any school has the time or staff to do this properly.’*

Maria answered the questionnaires but she could not allow me into the single sex Indian School where she worked. She responded, however, to questionnaire in May 2002:

**We do, informally, share ideas on how to discipline and motivate students. I attempt to improve my fluency in English by watching BBC World Service and American and British films. My colleagues, who have not done the RSA Celta, have weaker English than I have so sometimes they ask me to guide them or correct them.**

In my diary for 22 September 2002 I noted:

‘After observing one of the British Council teachers I was impressed with the way Philomena handled the class, constantly devising ways to keep the

interest of the young learners she was dealing with. However I did remark to myself that some of her comments on how the present participle works were not quite precise. Many of the trainees on the RSA Celta have the absolute minimum of knowledge of their subject.'

In interview this British Council - trained non – native speaking teacher from Brazil spoke out on this subject:

*'I have not formally studied the English language although I can speak quite a lot of Arabic. We are told that the RSA Celta is only the beginning of our learning curve. I expect to keep on learning throughout my career.'*

My notes following the interview included the open - ended question:

'And are the traditionally trained teachers who have studied foreign languages and/or linguistics also ready to learn from others and throughout their careers? Are they sensitive to the first language of their students? Attitude and traditional grammatical training can sometimes be a hindrance to absorption of new skills.'

### **International School**

The International School was really a national school in search of international recognition and training Kuwaitis from Primary through to High School. It was a teaching location where teachers appeared, throughout 2002 and 2003 to, almost unanimously, state that there was no facilitation of their learning and where they felt disappointed that their input of 2001 had not come to any fruition. Anne (who later joined the British Council) responded on 6 February 2002 to question 1 of teacher questionnaire (Cf Appendix 2):

**I feel highly disappointed that the work we put into our curriculum changes, in 2001 and this year, seems to have been forgotten. Many of the books we expected did not arrive. The English Department, perhaps because of changes of personnel, have not implemented the gradual integration of progressive grammar and sentence construction into our daily lessons. It took us a long time last year to agree that this would happen. The management are only interested in money.**



Then, in a follow – up interview, Anne expounded on this:

*‘This year many of my friends have left. They have extended the working day by one hour. The discipline around the school is atrocious. We are not allowed to make examples of the ringleaders since the management is afraid of alienating fee paying parents, despite all the staff agreeing on a tough new policy last year. Conditions are cramped. When you complain they threaten you with your job. I was told off for popping in to visit my former class the other day in the middle of a lesson (by arrangement with the teacher, of course). My headteacher was coming down the corridor and said I should not upset the class. How much worse can it get? I don’t feel like getting out of bed in the morning.’*

In my diary for March 25<sup>th</sup> 2002 I noted by way of personal reflection:

‘I agree with that respondent about things going downhill. The discipline is back to what it was before our initiative last year. Teachers are cornered for not being inventive enough to stop indiscipline in the classes. And here in the Secondary School with an all-male 16-18 year old population in my classes and no appropriate play facilities for them to expend their energies in breaks, it is definitely worse than Anne’s area, the Primary School, where she has a mixed ability class of seven year olds.’

On September 15<sup>th</sup> 2002 my researcher’s diary entry noted:

‘The Kuwaiti principal came in to my Social Studies class today, unannounced, to settle down the trouble makers. She sat in the back, talked to several students and *she, not they*, attempted to answer my questions on the American History text we had been studying. Later she called me to her office and advised me to alter my style of teaching and to use many varied approaches. I advised her that I found the material too high a level for second language learners – that other facilities, like the computer room were always taken up, that the library had very little, if anything, in it to use for resource material. I also told her that the discipline was central to learning. She said that if changes could not be brought about then I might receive a warning letter’



On reflection upon this interaction with my principal and ‘mentor’ (she referred to herself as such) I could sense that, no matter how hard I tried to stay aloof from personal problems, as an insider researcher and teacher, I could directly associate with teachers who felt ‘threatened.’ My sense of professionalism was under threat and I felt trapped. In the international perspective there are no unions and really no recourse to any intervention. Peer mentoring strategies could have relieved the tension but that avenue appeared closed.

I interviewed Anne who had been working in that school, who had been on my Social Studies team and whom I had observed on the RSA Celta course in 2001. She had left the school the month before. I realized that feelings ran high amongst my colleagues. I mentioned earlier that teachers felt positively challenged by the curriculum intervention but that in the practicum of keeping that curriculum ‘living’ (as the group had agreed we should) and changing strategies in the classroom to adapt to that ‘living curriculum’, they were already aware that they were disempowered as teachers.

Anne reported in interview in March 2002:

*‘I left that school because I was no longer enjoying it. The junior children were great. My training as an RSA Celta teacher and my experience at the British Council put me in good stead. I welcomed the curriculum change and, you remember, as the Social Studies group, we had drawn up a linear progression of learning which was also open to change. This year all my friends in the primary have felt constrained by management. We had discussed popping in, whenever the teaching day allowed, to watch each other even for ten minutes at a time and to swop ideas and strategies. This never happened. The management actively discouraged it. They just wanted us in front of a class –any class! And the curriculum..... although we have some new books, not all that we ordered arrived. They were threatening and they thought they had bought you out. Two of the other*



*girls obviously feel the same and have also left for jobs that pay less but provide some backup’.*

In my notes for 28 October 2002 I commented:

‘Seems that the whole curricular change last year may have been lip service activity to get Stage One of the American accreditation. Only one teacher, Jennifer, had anything positive to say. She simply continued the way she always had before the curricular changes.’

In fact, Jennifer had said to me on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2002:

*‘I provide most of my own material and within my own four walls and within the broader curriculum I decide what to do. No one bothers me. I am not unhappy here.’*

This kind of comment seemed to provide a more positive statement but, as an inside researcher, I could see by the isolationist policy this teacher followed on a daily basis that this could be referred to as ‘hitting the plateau’, a point where a teacher manages to survive, alluded to by Maynard and Furlong (1993)

#### Summary of meaning of results for Research Question 1

The mix of answers from the questionnaire, interview results and my own private diary provides a kind of interlocking story which is qualitative and interpretative as well as providing comparative elements. In this way, just like a narrative, the juxtaposition of the data provides immediate contrast with or without the narrator’s ‘voice’ being present.

The following statements represent either what EFL instructors and teachers have reported or conclusions I myself have arrived at through interpretation of results:

- The mainly negative, or at best resigned, attitudes coming out of Qatar Street and the International School seem to be in stark contrast with the more positive statements from the other three MOD centres and from the British Council - trained teachers.

- Some form of collaboration is practised at different levels in four of the six locations studied, even if certain supervisors are ‘passive’ facilitators.
- An intervention, such as action research, or inclusion of feedback techniques into training, facilitates active peer mentoring and positive attitudes by teachers towards collaboration
- When teachers do not learn and morale and self –image is low, management is seen as restrictive and / or the curriculum is prescriptive
- The profit motive appears to impede (a) the management of change (b) facilitation of teacher empowerment
- Curriculum is viewed as a living concept in locations where teachers collaborate on curriculum building
- Teachers have different notions of what a good EFL teacher’s training should be. My own conclusion is that dynamic teams are formed when many different skills and cultural and educational backgrounds are shared within a learning environment
- Skilled facilitators need to be trained to introduce and continuously encourage collaboration and active peer mentoring
- The internet is seen by some respondents as a possibly effective peer mentoring and learning tool and at present is used by several instructors as a materials resource for classroom activities, curriculum building and in the formation of lesson plans. Such usage introduces an international perspective to teacher learning.

**Question 2. To what extent does peer mentoring affect subject knowledge?**

As a supervisor at the Naval College and at the Military College, between the years 1997 and 2001, I encouraged peer mentoring techniques with a view to not only sharing pedagogic strategies, but also to promoting a sharing of strengths and skills in the language. With first language teachers such as they were at these two sites, there is a tendency to expect good knowledge of the subject matter, English. My own experience and the



growing opinion of teachers as they proceeded with peer mentoring is that this knowledge varied considerably.

### **Naval College**

Burt stated in interview in January 1999:

*'I know the language well. Grammar and Syntax are my strong points.'*

He was given the task of inserting grammar and syntax models into the Naval College curriculum we were building. It became clear, as my notes in early March 1999, suggest that:

*'Burt treats grammar as mainly nouns, adjectives and verbs and his explanation in the text which is under construction are wordy and difficult.'*

When the team met on 15 March 1999, to review work done on the new book, Campbell, working on text, stated:

*'I am trying to keep the pictures simple and related to the lives of basic seamen. We all know that they have difficulties with the present tense, let alone two or three different past tenses. Let's keep it simple. Burt has produced twenty pages of difficult verb paradigms. This is over their heads. I would like the grammar to relate only to the texts - drawing out the principal elements of the texts which will start with daily activities and be in the present simple. Then later I will introduce what happened yesterday or last week but keeping to the simple past – but only twenty or so regularly - used verbs should be hit.'*

Steve, who had a more eclectic view of teaching and valued the impact of radio narrative said:

*'I have a series of parts of a radio play. The language is not all simple but I have tried them out and they seem to enjoy them. I pre-teach some difficult words, idioms and have included these transcriptions for my part of the new book.'*

My own reactions – voiced to the team but only as a suggestion and as a facilitation and then written in my research diary, were:

‘The diversity of opinion on language context is to be expected and if we were a larger team I have no doubt it would be more diverse. Our team approach, however, has been able to assemble a plan for the curriculum and within that plan the team will iron out differences.’

I requested to enter, in the role of facilitator, the classroom of Steve to see how well the story technique was working out. Steve was happy to agree and subsequently I was very impressed by the success of the radio play technique. He had already pre - taught vocabulary and idiom for the story section that I listened to. The students responded well to checking for understanding and eagerly awaited the next ‘piece’ of the recording. At the end three students came up to me and asked if they could extend the lesson to hear the end. The teacher told them they would have to wait. I related the sense of expectancy on the part of the students to the others in the team. They decided to ask Steve how he used the text and the radio play. We decided to include some simplified texts on the subject of the story in our new curriculum and to illustrate it with drawings and computer generated graphics.

### **Military College**

At the Military College where I arrived as supervisor in April 2000 I found that three books had quite hurriedly been prepared and taught over the previous two years and Nick informed me that

*‘Some of it has worked, other bits not Everyone’s got different ideas about what goes in to a good course book’*

We decided as a team to review books 1 and 2, as book 3 had not been covered on the nine month officer cadet training course. The decision taken by the team, with one notable abstainer, was to start again and work out a new process of curriculum. The abstainer’s views are useful for comparison and opposing view – vital for the validity of grounded theory approach. Doug, the abstainer who came from Texas, noted:

*‘We worked all this out before – why go through it again? I find I can prepare notes to fill in the gaps. Why reinvent the wheel?’*



Interestingly, this teacher was completely individualistic in his approach to both curriculum development, classroom strategies, team work and in his response to questionnaire clearly stated in July 2000:

**I like to do it my way. We are all different. I am a native speaker and I'm a trained teacher. They have to learn something from me!**

I noticed the others in the group found him 'difficult' all through the seventeen months I acted as supervisor at the site. I observed him twice and found he had good classroom set-out techniques (numbering seats and settling students down). In the settings for this research (Chapter One) I clearly state that one of the difficult variables' of this site was class size. However, his own execution of lessons, often lengthy repetition exercises and away from the objectives laid out in a hurriedly prepared plan, did not seem to motivate students. I also had some doubts about his own use of English both spoken and written.

The dilemma as a supervisor was either to use all members of the team and not to isolate Doug, or risk losing the 'dynamic' element. His spoken English was US southern idiom and I noticed this idiom, coupled with a long drawn out drawl was part of his personality. He enjoyed passing that on. I impressed on the others in my role of facilitator, that there was a place for dissent in what kind of language to use and in his individual approach to what might make up his lesson delivery. The others never really accepted this and in peer-mentoring activities such as discussion of the balance between grammar, idiom, texts and listening exercises he staunchly remained adamant that

*I will handle it with my classes, the others with theirs.*

I became aware that sometimes my researcher self conflicted with my supervisory self. My supervisory self was aware that this highly individualistic and sometimes eccentric instructor was not really fitting in with the collaborative approach I was projecting. My researcher self allowed for dissent and a view from a different angle.

## JCSC

At the Joint Command and Staff College, ESP was the main subject of the core curriculum. Here, to be expected perhaps, the specialist skills of those who had experience of, for example,. map-reading or a military background came to the fore. Partial knowledge, however, does not make presentation skills necessarily easier as the teachers are not military experts; they are English Language teachers, first and foremost. The specific purpose of the English (ESP) should always be in the instructor's mind but ESP teachers do not provide the sum of the students' experience of a subject. Officers of the British Army and others (Russian and Czech) deliver the specialized element of training. In this content I relate the feelings of two teachers about subject knowledge.

Malcolm stated in response to questionnaire:

**You have to have some knowledge of practicalities – like map-reading. I feel my background as a town-planner in London gives me insights and the technical language to present classes on this. The military language has to be researched and presented in real-life scenarios**

John, however, had another viewpoint:

**We are not the providers of knowledge on military strategy, techniques or know - how. We should provide the kind of language which allows them to listen to lectures, to discuss issues and to write memos and reports on military developments.**

My own views are recorded in a research diary entry for October 2001:

‘The value of utilising both these viewpoints can be readily seen; a balance is required.’

Then, after interview with the JCSC supervisor, my colleague Mr. Prades, I could write another entry:

‘The supervisor is in favour of peer mentoring. He encouraged my intervention asking teachers to cooperate and write down what they had



learned, then to talk to me afterwards. He was interested in any formative message I could report. He found it absolutely necessary, at his site, that teachers collaborate on a daily basis. The supervisor is an English as a Second Language (ESL) speaker. A Canadian citizen but born in the Philippines, he has an excellent rapport with the Commanding Officer at the centre. Perhaps he has a special empathy with the students since they are also learning English as a Foreign Language as he once had to do.'

### **Qatar Street**

At Qatar Street the situation continued as normal and 'nothing much to report' answers came in from teachers in questionnaire and in interview. Reasons given were the non - responsive management and the non - responsive curriculum.

David in December 2002 reported in questionnaire:

**Linguistically the most useful colleagues are those who know some Arabic and who can help me in a very basic way to produce a sheet with English - Arabic vocabulary. My students are the bottom class and they need this.**

In Jan 2003 I asked David if there was someone who helped in this translation:

*Yes, Geoffrey has a degree in Arabic and he helps me and others during the lunch break. Also one of the Kuwaiti majors gives us a hand sometimes.*

Teachers who had a good English language background were identified and moved to the other centres where their input might be more effective. Some teachers who complained had their contracts terminated in 2002 and 2003.

### **British Council**

The British Council training centre brought interesting results in so far as about half of the trainees were non-native speakers. During the course I had remarked in notes (February 27 2001):

‘The non-native speakers feel especially vulnerable and seem nervous, often steering, in preparation of lessons, to very simple themes involving uncomplicated grammatical or syntactical presentation.’

When the course was over, two respondents, from four non-native speakers responding to the questionnaire (see Appendix 10) felt that the peer-feedback was ‘frightening’ and Sanjula said that during lessons, where peers and tutors were seated along the back rows for critical observation, they were sometimes ‘terrified.’ The remaining two did not respond to post-course questionnaire but, after follow - up, Sanjula could say in interviews in September 2001:

*‘I am at a school now where I have neither time nor energy to devote to peer feedback techniques. I have good relations with colleagues – we each do our jobs which are pretty tiring. Sometimes we ask each other about tricky language concepts or precise grammar – but I think we could do with at least one native speaker at this (Indian Private ) school.’*

Philomena, on the other hand, a NNS whose English was good, but not always precise, was offered a job at the British Council school (where she had received her training). She could state in interview on 19 September 2001:

*‘The feedback is always good here and I feel I am getting better at my expression. The facilities are great – both internet and help from colleagues. Sometimes I try out a lesson which a native speaker colleague has found successful. I can also check my English without feeling inferior. People like to help.’*

### **International school**

At the International School most of the staff were Arabic, Lebanese and Palestinian, or East European married to British or American people. There was a small core of native speakers in the secondary and primary departments. Here the management seemed to be the difficulty, desiring quick changes in curriculum to suit their business needs – which they felt



were helped by achieving international recognition for the curriculum and employing a token amount of Western staff.

Jane expressed her feelings in interview in September 2002

*I simply get on with the job. I would like to learn more - maybe do a diploma but here it is about a 7am – 2.30 job. They don't want teachers to learn more. We're supposed to already know our stuff.*

Paul, however, had more of a positive approach expressed in interview in October 2002:

*The international group of teachers could really get together here and learn from each other. The non-native speakers could learn from us and vice-versa because some of them are good teachers.*

My own observation as a participant observer at the international school is reflected in a diary entry for January 2003:

**Nothing much has changed since 2001. It is all words. The discipline is, in my view, badly managed. A second group of Australians, British and Americans are leaving this year. Teacher sharing is essential as a whole – school activity if the school is to survive as an international teaching centre but, because of students' negative attitudes to learning, nothing seems to happen.**

#### Summary of meaning of results for Research Question Two

- Subject knowledge, of English, is facilitated mainly by open sharing of varied skills
- Curriculum insights (or lack of them) on the part of management could affect subject learning development on the part of teachers
- Some teachers are frightened of seeming conspicuous especially those on the first steps of the ladder
- Managers of schools/training centres need to open the door to more collaborative language learning for teachers
- Good language curriculum reflects on strategies in the classroom which, in turn, reflect on student interest (and, hopefully, learning).

### **Question 3. How does peer mentoring affect the quality of teaching?**

#### **Naval School**

Steve, at the Naval College, reflected in interview in Jan 2000:

*'I have really benefited from discussion with my colleagues on both formation of curriculum and how we might teach it.'*

There were outstanding examples of good teaching practice in this setting.

The research diary, January 2000, reports from the Naval College:

'Steve seems to command respect for his very valuable input into curriculum and his effective teaching. The students and teaching peers relate very well to him.'

#### **Military College**

Doug at the Military College wanted to be singular in his approach:

*All teachers are educated in different ways. Once I'm in my classroom I want to do it my way.* (12 March 2000). Despite the desire by this teacher to 'do his own thing' the main body of teachers at the site used peer mentoring to good effect.

On Tuesday 12 January 2001 I wrote in my diary:

'I had requested a staff meeting to discuss various matters but had also intended to open discussion for group mentoring since we had a specific problem. Teachers had been teaching a whole platoon by themselves and were finding it impossible to discipline a class of up to sixty active 18/19 year olds. Teachers had complained that it was impossible to teach such a large group and there was no quality in the teaching. I opened the discussion by reminding my group of teachers of my interest in peer mentoring whereby we all share our ideas and then try them out, coming back to the table to reflect on how well they worked. Three of the five teachers suggested ways of keeping them quiet and keeping their interest. Two others, who had been at the site the longest, would only countenance the splitting of the group into a bottom half (remedial) and a top half. The



others listened. I said that we should think hard and long about strategies for teaching large groups as we could only split them occasionally as the timetable permitted.

Next day classes were split and I myself taught a class to facilitate the sharing. The teachers came back happier. At least they had been able to get past taking the register. One teacher had not realized the potential he had in the class before that day, as students had not been able to show their worth in the large and noisy class. We agreed to split classes whenever possible but also to collaborate on strategies for teaching the larger groups when necessary.’ The experience showed that the instructors could respond to situations collectively, listen to each other and affect the quality of teaching, even if only to a limited extent.

### JCSC

Ray from JCSC could respond in interview in May 2001:

*‘Some of us are better at creating good lesson plans, accessing the internet for up- to- date information and all that. Some are really good at what I call ‘animating’ a class and some are grammar freaks.’*

### Qatar Street

The restrictive ALC curriculum appeared to restrain any attempts at interesting or innovative teaching. David stated in questionnaire concerning the Qatar Street centre, in October 2001:

**The lessons go by the book. If you don’t cover the book the students complain as they are tested every two weeks on content. Sometimes I vary off the point just to relieve the boredom – but you have to be careful that this doesn’t get back to the supervisors.**

One of the duties of a supervisor was to observe teachers and file an annual report on the quality of their teaching. The observation sheet given to me, however, was lacking, in my view, in detail of how strategies affected good learning. The sheet was sparse in points of observation and open to highly

subjective comments. David, from Qatar Street, commented in questionnaire on 19 June 2000:

**I feel my performance in the classroom was not really judged critically. It was just about whether my face fitted.**

### **British Council**

The diary for April 2001 reports:

‘The trainees who are on this RSA Celta course are all on edge and anxious to prove themselves in practice. One outstanding practitioner, Sandy, had been a housewife before the course but had learned much from her input sessions and her feedback. She demonstrably used all the learning to improve her observed performances and was congratulated by students and peers after providing a finely tuned balance between presentation of the notion of *possibility* (using words like *maybe*) with student practice, games and learning checking. I am tempted to say a natural but on reflection correct myself to a positive learner.’

Sanjula related in an interview conducted in May 2001:

*‘On the (RSA Celta) course I really thought I was doing what they wanted – like making my classes interesting and varied, but some of the feedback was too negative for me.*

### **The International School:**

At the International School, Robert responded in Questionnaire 2 issued to him in October 2002:

**I thought the link between new curriculum development and better teaching was nil. We spent hours deciding what should be the content of Social Studies but never really got the chance to change strategies...like how we put the material over.**

At this research centre there was an example, noted in the diary in February 2003, of a useful collaboration in classroom observation:

‘After much persuasion of management, who do not seem to promote such inter-dependence, I managed to spend one hour with Jennifer, a primary



teacher, conducting a lesson on Social Science. In American curriculum terms this might equate to Life Studies mixed with some Geography and History. We had already met in peer-mentoring sessions with all Social Studies teachers from kindergarten up to final year secondary and had discussed how best to present and reinforce skills and subject matter. EFL had been central to presentation. We looked at Jennifer's plan and she explained why she would present description of 'Home and Family' – with emphasis on *I* and *My* (first person). I suggested that maybe we could introduce *She/He* and *Her/His/Its* (third person) too since we were dealing with Primary Two and see if pupils could use correct verb endings for first and third person. She had cards with pictures of home and family to stimulate language and a game where each student had to say of another where he/she lives and how big the family, including pets, is. She had twenty young children of between six and seven years whose first language was Arabic (except for one with Polish as the mother language). She was their class teacher and had a strict approach:

*'You can't let them get out of their seats or start talking together – it turns into mayhem.'* (Interview 12 Feb 2002)

The entry in my diary for the same day 12 Feb 2002 reads:

*'I found the lesson to be well conducted perhaps a little too much teacher – talk time and this might have been related to her earlier comment (cited above). Only certain children spoke out clearly – others were too shy or unable to express themselves. In post – lesson discussion we discussed whether it might be an idea to consider strategies to encourage the poorer English speakers. Jennifer asked me for some suggestions and I mentioned splitting the class into different activity groups – perhaps with one good speaker in each group –using the same cards but all groups working at different levels. Teacher walks round – listening, sometimes correcting. Jennifer said she would try that another time.'*

Jennifer then came into my class on the 14 February 2002. Social Studies for Seniors Grade 10 consisted of American history. Though she found the subject matter, 'Slavery In The American South Pre-Civil War', to be



interesting, she found the textbook we were using far too advanced for the students. My board notes and some hand –out sheets had helped to simplify matters but she commented:

*'I wondered whether you engaged all the students. Many students, during your 80 minutes period, were talking and jumping out of their seats, shouting in Arabic.'*

I replied that discipline was not helped by an all - male class of older adolescent students, sixteen and seventeen year olds, packed into a small classroom. I pointed to the general discipline problem throughout the Secondary School. She suggested internet research. I said I had tried this at times but the computer room was always taken up by other IT classes at my scheduled times for this class. We followed up with a general discussion of why discipline was so bad. Arabic teachers (Arabic/Islamic Studies/Maths) seemed to have more control. This we put down to fear and cultural respect. The Arabic direction in the school and the Arabic teachers had '*strong buttons to press*', said Jennifer. They spoke Arabic as their first language, had knowledge of their parents, retained ability to use expulsion – although for *financial reasons* this never seemed to be implemented – and manipulated the greatly respected role of the Arabic language in the Islamic tradition. We then discussed whether this truly was an International School. We came to the conclusion that it was a Kuwaiti private national school with international pretensions. The American curriculum presented great difficulties for the students in subjects like English and Social Studies.

Interviews with and replies to questionnaires from other international school teachers pointed to the teaching quality being severely limited by:

- Lack of strong school policy on discipline
- Gaining international accreditation by imposing a foreign and non-culturally -sensitive curriculum
- Lack of space and good resources
- A leaning in school ethos toward respect for Arabic-taught subjects which did not allow for a truly international atmosphere in the school



- Resistance to new ideas (like peer support) which were regarded as ‘threatening’.

I drew conclusions from a wide selection of responses from questionnaire, interviews and from practical observation and summed up my ideas in a diary entry for January 2003:

‘In seven years of research in Kuwait (for a Master’s degree and then for pilot and doctoral research) I have observed teachers in practice, read questionnaire responses, interviewed, peer-mentored, acted as mentee, and as ‘fly on the wall’ and facilitated change. I have noticed some clear patterns emerging. These patterns, however, do not hide the complexity both for the teachers and myself in motivating trainees and teachers to keep learning how best to affect classroom practice’.

#### Summary of interpretation of results for Research Question Three

- The connection between responsiveness to curriculum and classroom strategy is strong
- There are many different styles of teaching
- Peer feedback, especially if negatively phrased, can be counter-productive
- Management has an essential role in the facilitation of good teaching and provision of essential resources
- Some teachers are resistant to critique by others and locked into attitudes about teaching. Very few EFL teachers are intrinsically motivated
- When peer-mentoring strategies are used they normally provide stimulation and a sense of sharing of difficulties.

#### **Question 4. How does peer mentoring affect curriculum development and building?**

Already we have examined certain teacher attitudes to curriculum by examining quality of teaching and continuous learning. The notion of a living curriculum is intricately linked with how it is taught and how teachers perceive learning and how they approach curriculum building.

We have seen in responses and data incoming from the first three questions that curriculum is central to all other questions.

In a diary entry for March 2003 I noted:

‘Watching the process of peer mentoring trials over four to five years in all three settings and in all the centres of teaching it has become clear to me that curriculum is central to teachers view of how they learn and how they teach.’

### **Naval School**

At the Naval School, the peer-mentoring became an informal affair with the curriculum development and revision being shared but, according to Dan, the one person who remained there from 1998 to 2003, the supervisor now guided and informed the instructors what to input. The brain - storming and collaborative approaches we had carried out in the 1997-2000 period were no longer in operation. Dan reported in interview, 16 March, 2003:

*‘The original books we wrote were meant to be revised as we experimented with them in the classroom. Instead they have become the staple curriculum and are never changed. I preferred the flexible approach we used to have – it meant constant work and revision but it worked and the students found their books fresh and more challenging.’*

In a previous interview in June 2002 the same instructor, Dan, had suggested that the peer-mentoring trials had, in hindsight, been:

*‘highly productive and morale boosting years. We all felt useful – we all felt like professionals with all our expertise being used. We had a living curriculum and each one of us used to lead discussion on his area of specialism.’*

I remembered the weekly rota basis for 1998 when the instructor with the best computer skills taught us, for example, how to create graphics. I would give a talk on peer-mentoring and collaboration, then Steve would illustrate



how to give classes based on radio plays and how he might insert this into our ongoing curriculum building.

In interview in March of 2003 Dan was asked if he felt peer-mentoring was still in use for revision or building of curriculum at the Naval College:

*'No, really, now we all just sit at our own desks and get on with an area of curriculum when we are not teaching. I offer skills I have learned on the computer and others share informally if they have strong points.'*

My impression recorded in April 2003 in the research diary was:

*'Here, there is a sense of sliding into non-collaborative practice - it seems to have just slipped into this. I link it, without blaming anybody, on lack of trained facilitators.'*

### **The Military College**

The Military College produced similar results with three teachers, from six approached, stating that curriculum approach had changed since my departure in 2001. In 2003 the course had been lengthened to a three year course for Military Cadets leading to a Bachelor of Military Science (BMS). This meant new curriculum expansion and writing (for example creation of listening materials and graphics ).

Jim, in questionnaire response January 2003 states:

**We, more than ever, need to constructively use the skills we have here. Our supervisor, however, is now very single-minded and expects things to be done his way which is, in fact the company's way.**

Interviewing Jim for further insights (late January 2003) into what he meant, he expounded:

*'The supervisor is running scared of the company's higher management. They (the DOS and the ADOS based at Qatar Street) even mentioned replacing all our previous work with the dreaded American Language Course. Fortunately, our Colonel at site here refused this.'*

I knew that Jim had spent time, as had most instructors, at Qatar Street, teaching the ALC (American Language Course) which figures so negatively in this research because only the tiniest minority of instructors and only one supervisor really supported it and that for reasons like;

*'You don't have to think. You just turn the pages'* (Interview with Supervisor Qatar St. June 20 1999).

Jim had cooperated with the collaborative direction I had initiated when I had been supervisor at the Military College. He obviously enjoyed relating to others and appeared to get satisfaction from creating well-worked out curriculum that drew on his own and other members of the team's skills. Now, 25 January 2003 he intimated:

*'That approach is over. We are just teachers now. Do as we are told'.*

From January 2000 to summer 2001 we had revised as a team the three books that had been hastily put together during the two years before I went to the College. Whilst we planned revision of the three books and wrote a fourth and created listening exercises, I had encouraged group peer-mentoring and brain storming for whole - team decisions on the curriculum. The teachers had mostly teamed up in pairs to peer-mentor. I requested they observe each other, putting curriculum into practice, feeding back to each other and bringing the results to the team every two weeks.

After my departure in summer 2001 I kept in touch with three teachers who continued to teach there. They continued to collaborate in exam formulation and curriculum development but no longer through observing each others lessons. This observation became the new supervisor's sole responsibility. Then gradually the cooperation between teachers faltered.

## **JCSC**

At the JCSC, Ray mentioned the input of an individual's knowledge into the formation of curriculum at the site. He replied to Question 3 of the teacher questionnaire in January 2003:



**Yes. Individual knowledge (eg of map reading, geography work, science and economics) is used in both revision and update of curriculum. IT skills heavily shared in preparing final print version.**

John had been at Qatar St (Cf p127) and was transferred to the Joint Command and Services College. I interviewed him in April 2001:

*'Here it is entirely different. I feel useful and what we invent as curriculum is what we teach. You have to keep adjusting to the officers needs here. Everyone cooperates – sharing ideas and lesson plans. No, there is no regular or formal peer-mentoring in place. No special time for doing this. But when the classes stop we have a two to three month period for writing up new curriculum or adding to the good ideas that may have worked in the classroom.'*

In my research diary for June 2001 I noted:

*'The JCSC is a place where peer mentoring activities do exist, even if they do not call them that, and I have encouraged a group of four to report back to me on how they work together.'*

I conducted a joint interview with the four on June 4 2001 and discovered how John, now felt about sharing knowledge and skills:

*'I feel I am a good teacher and I invent extra material to go with the existing base curriculum. To tell you the truth, I don't really see why I should share these ideas with people who don't make an effort.'*

I noticed that among the four was a former peer-mentor at the Naval College (1997-2000) when I had been supervisor there. I knew him to be a very inventive teacher and one who always shared insights into what worked for him in the classroom. I asked that teacher, Steve, for his ideas:

*'Some don't want to share. As far as I am concerned anyone can ask for my ideas and are welcome to use any ideas I've gathered, from the internet, for example, or to use any expertise I may have. I would feel honoured, in fact.'*

Then Fiona joined in the discussion

*'Yes, I've used Steve's help often over the last month. I was new here and since we are working on a flexible curriculum and each class of officers seemed to require a different approach I was quite nervous as to how to begin. Steve and Malcolm spent lots of time pointing out that the curriculum is always in change and showing me how they handle preparation.'*

My diary notes for June 6 2001, following this interview, indicate my interest in this group as a peer-mentoring unit:

*'John seemed isolated in his attitude of not being willing to share from others. Although he was against the prescribed curriculum at Qatar Street now he feels superior in a situation in which others share in creating new curriculum. The other three in this pilot group of peer mentors seem to, very effectively, work as a team and one person seems to have enjoyed a close mentoring relationship with two others.'*

However, since I was examining peer-mentoring and not traditional mentoring, I returned to the JCSC centre on 6 November 2002 to review exactly what type of mentoring was in place. The instructor who had been new to the site and who had valued her colleagues' input was now able to say:

*'Now I've more than got the hang of it. I'm offering as much to them now. I've got good experience of recent PGCE training and I worked in the theatre, backstage for two years. When we discuss the lesson plans, which inevitably are added to our store of useful presentations and therefore are our curriculum, I can input the kind of things which are good to animate the class. Myself, Steve and Donald have such a good rapport now. John stays out on his own. He thinks he is the best. Ok, let him be like that. But I noticed he was having a little trouble with one group – they thought his lessons were going a bit stale.'*

I was reminded of two other ladies – one the wife of the Director of Studies based at Qatar Street – based at the JCSC but who did not wish to join the



peer-mentoring trials I had initiated in 2000 and followed up into 2001 and 2002. The Director of Studies' wife taught rigid grammar and the supervisor of JCSC had told me on 2 July 2001 :

*'She is having problems but sort of threatens the rest of us by insisting she knows better and that her husband backs her in her approach.'*

She did not seek collaboration with her colleagues and by November 2001 the officers themselves, Kuwaiti mainly with some Saudis, one Chinese and one Lebanese, asked for her removal as a teacher. Another teacher who was also self sufficient in her planning and delivery, moved on to another centre in June 2002. The core people, more flexible in their use of varied skills and highly responsive to their students, seemed to stay on. Three of these core people were still there in September 2003, having joined the college between 1998 -9.

My diary reports in January 2002 that:

*'The JCSC group, perhaps because of the importance of the centre and the supervisor's wish to have a homogenous team that can react to all circumstances, work together and have settled in to a routine which seems to work.'*

By April of 2003, however, having requested admission to the centre, having spoken to the supervisor and having reissued the teacher's questionnaire pro-forma I had discovered that:

*'All the teachers seem entrenched in their own value-laden positions'* (Diary entry April 26 2003). Some of these attitudes have already been observed in answers to research questions one to three but entrenched attitudes are very noticeable when it comes to discussion of what should go into a curriculum.

I observed in the diary on April 20 2003

*'It appears that Donald is a grammar expert and looks down on those who simply animate but don't have a good knowledge of grammar, syntax and construction to insert into curriculum plans because of not having studied*

another language in depth (he is a graduate of French and is married to a French person).’

I noticed that Malcolm, the ex - town planner who had been at the centre for four years, had a body of curriculum which he had built up with others in the team that he had enjoyed working with. However he now said in interview (April 26 2003).

*Everyone does their own thing now. To tell you the truth the consistency of the group changes that much that I now just get on with my own job.*

The computer - skilled instructor, Garth, who had been at that centre for four years had created a bank of good computer-generated graphics to assist certain classes. He had always appeared to me to have been resistant to sharing information but informally cooperated with the ex-town planner since they had both been there for some years. He did not actively assist the others. The ex-Naval School peer-mentor, Steve, who had been with me from 1997 to 2000, still advocated maximum collaboration and was ‘*always ready to share*’ (interview 26 April 2003) but found the ethos of sharing had ‘*subsided somewhat at the JCSC.*’

I observed in my research diary April 28 2003:

‘This is surely why the process of action research and insider research over some years is so valid. I would have always thought that JCSC would remain the top peer-mentoring site, especially with the same pro-collaboration supervisor and three original staff (out of seven) remaining in place for six years. It is clear to me that the ‘old-timers’ have become embedded in attitude now and that without a facilitator, a facilitator trained in collaborative techniques and peer-mentoring strategies, the process can die.’

### **Qatar St.**

At Qatar Street, John, a respondent to teacher questionnaire in January 2000, (who would later join JCSC) described the connection between unresponsive curriculum and morale like this:



**At this centre there is absolutely no teacher input into the American Language course we teach. We teach it like automatons – page turning and driven by two weekly exams. When we try to input extra information this is discouraged and in some cases teachers have received low evaluations by the supervisors for not sticking to the subject matter. There is a feeling of low morale amongst most of us.**

There is a marked contrast between John's comments from the JCSC (page. 124) and his reaction to the more prescribed course at Qatar St.

### **The British Council**

At the British Council I was aware that there had been minor complaints, from both Kuwaitis and some teachers, about the use of books culturally designed for European children which had many references to discos, dating and suchlike phenomena which would have to be left out in an Islamic context such as Kuwait. The teachers there and their managers realized that they required extra materials from other sources, from their own knowledge, from sharing with others and from trial – and - error processes. The international reputation of the British Council was at stake. Hence Robert in interview April 2003 posited the view:

*'This is why the British Council likes to train its own teachers through the RSA Celta (and eventually the Delta) and use that stable of teachers for the part-time jobs it has in the evenings. It knows that we can use recommended strategies and that we can adjust to many different circumstances eg curriculum building.'*

While observing Philomena and Anne teaching on the regular British Council courses in 2002, I noticed they were using a passage from the internet for their reading passage and had accessed games from their own British Council bank of materials. This flexibility diverted from the normal British Council instruction whereby similar materials were taught all over the world.

Anne reported in interview in April 2002:

*We make up our own stuff and regularly we share our materials with colleagues who teach the same age groups.*

My own reflections appeared in the diary for that same month:

‘There is no ordered peer-mentoring approach but an informal system works by trial and error. The senior teachers don’t obviously share with others but feedback and discussion appears to be encouraged especially amongst teachers like those who, having just completed the RSA Celta course, are new to the Council.’

Signs were encouraging but I could suppose that not all teachers might get on as well as those two teachers appeared to and would not necessarily share so readily in extra - curricular building. I was reminded that sharing with others is often dependent upon personality and what people might have immediately in common, eg their strengths or weaknesses. A trained facilitator is required to prompt everyone in the team to share in a businesslike and professional manner.

Maria at the Indian school reported in November 2001:

**This is a completely different attitude to curriculum. We follow the Indian National Curriculum which is very traditional and very formal. Each teacher just gets on with her own job and we are normally too busy to collaborate to any extent**

### **The International School**

At the International School I quickly learned that English Language, the language of the greater part of the curriculum, was the biggest stumbling block for student learning in an all-Kuwaiti private school. All subjects, mostly written and delivered in English, required review and changes. A linear process of development throughout this curriculum change can be shown in a chart.



**Table 4.7 Development of International School Curriculum Change.**

Date	Event
April 2001:	Coordinator of curriculum innovation states objectives and lectures on ‘this new opportunity’
June 2001:	Meetings to discuss linear progression of American Social Studies (Life studies, History, Geography).
July 2001:	Decisions on how to teach it – without overlap and building in some flexibility: Visit by accrediting body is encouraging.
September 2001:	Decisions on progressive English development..
October 2001:	An overall plan produced throughout the school for curriculum. I joined the school and was put in charge of Social Studies curriculum team
December 2001:	Visit by accrediting body accepts curriculum ‘in principle.’ School satisfied.
January 2002:	Initial attempt to introduce flexible teaching with curriculum and peer-mentoring to create new strategies frowned upon
March 2002:	Certain International teachers leave because of lack of student discipline and strain of not being allowed to follow the peer-mentoring plan for a living curriculum.
April 2002:	Meetings concerning poor discipline at the school puts the onus on teachers for not making classes interesting enough to enhance discipline and attention in class.
April 2002 to May 2003:	International teachers leave en masse during both summer periods. Stage Two of accreditation awarded. No change in managerial attitudes to teachers and discipline problems grow worse. A group of teachers wrote to the accreditation board in January 2003 complaining that the school should not be accredited and that everything they saw on inspection visits was pure veneer.

If we couple the above process with comments by teachers and two quotes from the Kuwaiti principal (one in 2002 and the other in April 2003), we may be able to better identify what kind of a process the curriculum innovation was.

Sally from my Social Science team in one of our curriculum meetings (June 2002 ) stated:

*‘This is a good chance to get this thing right. I teach, as you all know, Year 4 and most of the interesting topics in History and Geography have been covered by the time they get to me. For example the kids love Egypt...They are Arabic and it is interesting. I would enjoy doing that topic...but others get there before me.’*



We discussed how we could tackle layered progress with the teaching of topics and how we could best do this as their language progresses from Year One to Year Five. I myself covered Egyptian history from an advanced book. I discussed how these second language learners could not use this book which first language learners in the U.S would find hard to understand. We contacted a supplier of books and information packs and examined useful materials for next year's materials order.

Sally could comment in October 2002 in questionnaire response that:

**I feel we have a good linear and progressive curriculum now and we have worked out ways to try out ideas and come back to the team. We have also discussed peer observation and feedback but that process is difficult in our circumstances. The management do not seem to want to encourage that.**

My own notes in December 2002 point to a difficult impasse:

'Many of the new books did not arrive, were vetted by Kuwaiti management or were found too expensive. The discipline remains out of control and this is blamed on teachers' presentation and handling of subject matter. Clearly Kuwaiti management do not wish to follow up discipline procedures with the real trouble makers, as they will lose money. The principal follows only one adage – *the teachers are to blame!*'

Naturally the drop-out rate of international teachers was high and in Summer 2003, all the British, American and Australian secondary school staff left as they had the previous year. The principal is quoted as saying in June 2002 to all:

*'We really need your help...your input will be invaluable.'*

And in April 2003:

*'We don't want any of this mentoring business. You all need to read more about teaching and about enhancing the curriculum. There are books in the library. Try them.'*



I had visited the library and the school resources for the children were minimal. There were also only two dated articles on teaching in the United States. The library resource like other resources in the school obviously suffered from a lack of funding. Most of the international staff could only assume that the Principal covered up the real issues behind the lack of discipline and the resourcing in the school on behalf of the Directors and owners who were driven mainly, if not totally, by desire for profit.

#### Summary of meaning of findings for Research Question Four

- Clearly the curriculum renewal did not correct the indiscipline at the International School (the principal had long suggested there was a link)
- Discipline might well have been improved especially at lower levels, by dynamic teaching of organised curriculum but this dynamism was not encouraged
- Those institutions that had a responsive and flexible curriculum lent themselves to better interaction amongst the teachers
- Unresponsive curricula, delineated and not open to flexibility went hand in hand with a non-sharing ethos between teachers. Management, ie supervisors, directors of schools, and head teachers had a direct effect on curriculum building (whether negative or positive)
- Even when managerial control allowed for informal sharing and encouraged collaboration, the presence of a trained facilitator was required if the sharing ethos was not to go stale after some time
- Teachers themselves needed to exhibit intrinsic interest in developing a living flexible curriculum by sharing their varied skills.

#### **Question 5. How does peer mentoring affect the way teachers respond to change ?**

The responses and reflections outlined in the earlier examination of the four research questions in this chapter already have indicated how change in learning and change in curriculum can be effected by two teachers or a group of teachers sharing skills. It is commonly accepted that change and

the management of change are topics of perennial interest within education. Change occurs or is required by the client but rarely do managers or teachers respond well.

### **Naval College**

Where peer-mentoring had been encouraged, at the Naval College in 2000, my respondent, Dan, could offer a positive response in the teacher questionnaire that he returned to me on 28 March 2000.

**The team works well together here and because we share skills in curriculum building and share strategies for class, we are very adaptable to the changing needs of the Naval Officers and the Basic Seamen.**

The same respondent remained at that centre and noted in April 2003.

**It is a small team. We cooperate but not as we used to between 1997 and 2000. Now it's informal but we seem to have the same courses every year –not so much to respond to now.**

I noted in April 2003 after reading the above:

‘The curricula need to be constantly in change even if the courses are the same and the basic curricula written. Different strategies for teaching can be shared. Peer-observation would be a good idea at that centre because not all teachers are teaching at the same time. If I were still there I would be encouraging skill and strategy sharing because, in my experience, one never knows what the Colonel in charge will ask for next.’

### **Military College**

At the Military College, where the many changing variables at play created a climate of constant change, (Cf: Chapter One: The Settings, p.6) a responsive team was necessary simply to have the flexibility to cope with the change. During my own time there, peer mentoring had appeared to be a good vehicle for creating an atmosphere of responsiveness.



Nick could report in questionnaire in February 2001 concerning the Military College:

**The supervisor's leaning towards peer-mentoring has us working in pairs observing each other's practice, in groups preparing and revising curriculum and inputting all our different skills to create and bank our exams. We are a team that can and has to respond to anything.**

In April 2003, however, Nick was interviewed:

*'They have tried to impose that American Language course! The management at Qatar Street have no idea of how we operate here and our supervisor at present seems to be a stooge for them. Luckily our Colonel did not accept the ALC. We have this new three - year degree course within which English Language is now very important. We really need a good collaborating team to create good materials and it is a chance to refresh our whole approach to our teaching. Now the team is not the same though. Two or three of us share skills informally – but it's not the organized approach we had before.'*

## JCSC

Joint Command and Staff College (JCSC) teachers were constantly adapting to change and most of the staff managed to create and teach appropriate material. Two staff, who either could not or did not adapt, had been requested to leave. The directives from Qatar Street were '*obstreperous*' – according to the supervisor, interviewed on 12 June 2002, and were '*hierarchical in approach – they're afraid to let go of the reins.*'

*I am the man on the spot and I talk to the Colonel in charge of my college every day. When I introduce new ideas the DOS at Qatar Street doesn't like it. He likes to think he's in control and can call the shots but we all know he is not knowledgeable about English teaching and he is a terrible manager of people.*

I knew there had, for two to three years, been tension between the company's Director of Studies and the supervisor at Joint Command, who had always been a promoter of responsiveness to change. The supervisor



had been saved by his own Colonel from dismissal from the company. The Colonel told the DOS not to interfere at that site. I noted in my diary 12 June 2002:

‘There are risks in being inventive. Management of the training company desperately hold on to their locus of power and fear change.’

One of the factors of change inherent in international companies and schools in the Middle East is the change every two to three years of teaching personnel. Most of the people, who were first introduced to my peer-mentoring trials and who were initiated into them, eventually left but the promising factor is that there were always a few remaining. All these peer mentors, despite a sense of staleness when their supervisors or managers did not continuously facilitate dynamic team action, remained as catalysts in the different centres. The remaining peer mentors included three instructors at the JCSC who had brought transferable skills from other occupations. An entry in the diary for 30 April 2003 reads as follows:

‘In a real sense those people at JCSC who entered teaching later are aware of change in their lives and are noticeably better agents of change than those who are entrenched in attitudes they have always had since their training.’

### **Qatar Street**

Maureen stated in questionnaire in October 2001:

**At Qatar Street they just want to keep the status quo. I think the managers are scared of change – even of us adding our own little ideas to make the American Language Course more interesting.**

By April 2003 another respondent at Qatar Street, David, had added:

**Change is not encouraged here. We live in a very stale atmosphere.**

### **British Council**

The British Council compared favourably with some other settings in that its curriculum, although culturally not sensitive enough, was supplemented by good extra material and that the teachers I was able to visit and speak to employed strategies that were responsive to the needs of different types of



students made up of early learners, older children and adults. There appeared to be constant ‘response’ at the British Council.

The British Council teaching manager stated in interview, April 2003:

*‘We encourage our teachers to create and share materials, to download appropriate materials from the Internet and to form a bank of useable materials. We encourage them to visit each others’ classes if they can. It is not often possible as all our teaching is telescoped into four hours in the evening at present. They seem to quite naturally feed back to each other in the staff room, however.’*

My notes, (3 July 2002) taken after a visit to Sanjula in an Indian School (using English as medium for teaching), indicate positive results for a teacher who shared skills learned at the British Council.

‘After her training on the RSA Celta course Sanjula felt her own use of English language should improve and did not indicate a great willingness to continue peer-mentoring as she felt the others at the Indian School might not understand or comply. She is now adamant that she is improving her English and she definitely is an agent of change at the school – having given mini-presentations at the school’s monthly in-service days this year.’

Her comments in interview in January 2003 seemed to indicate that she had a principal who facilitated the sharing of ideas, especially on in-service days:

*My principal encourages me to give presentations to the other teachers and I think she values my training at the British Council (23 Jan 2003)*

### **International School**

The response to change by teachers at the International School was enthusiastic at first but when it became apparent that management would not correct the discipline problem – one of the issues at the heart of why curriculum changes could not be effective – attitudes of teachers changed. There was a second underlying reason for lack of responsiveness on the part

of management, highlighted in Robert's response in questionnaire in March 2003:

**The management here have only one purpose – making money – the curriculum change needed to be linked to our classroom strategies. But nothing works because these kids are spoilt and get away with too much. The headmistress, acting on the executive management's wishes, seems to be protective of an Arabic way of containment of Arab children whilst our ideas of a living curriculum which we can experiment with in a positive way are negated. The international teachers are blamed for not keeping a sustained interest in all subjects which, according to them, is because the international teachers are not adapting their teaching to the needs of the students. This is exactly what we wanted to do but were not allowed or encouraged to do. The management will not exclude troublesome students for fear of losing money. That is why this year, like others... they will lose most of the international staff.**

This response should be contrasted with Lisa's from the International School. She said in interview April 2003

*'I have always got on OK here...we get well paid compared to most schools in Kuwait...just keep your head down and you are OK.'*

My diary notes (April 20<sup>th</sup> 2003) qualify this teacher's statement:

'Lisa teaches younger children, mixed boys and girls, whilst she runs the computer room. She has witnessed teachers showing dissatisfaction and for personal reasons prefers not to empathize with that dissatisfaction. She has no overall responsibility for the welfare of a single class. Perhaps she has found a quiet niche. Her own background, I discovered, was not in education as such - she obtained the job through 'contacts' (her word). I admire her 'positive stance' but must question whether it is an honest stance or merely stemming from self - interest.'



### Summary of meaning of findings for Research Question Five

- Change was inherent in all processes of teaching and training in the three settings.
- The response or lack of response to change seemed to depend on intrinsic aims of certain teachers and managers in smaller areas of influence. More positive whole school developments required an ethos of responsiveness on the part of everyone in the school. That ethos should be external and visible
- Management of EFL training and EFL issues in the three settings varied. The top-down hierarchical approach embedded in a non-responsive attitude led to problems of staff morale and often to inaction.
- Teachers themselves varied in their moral stance towards action. Where peer – mentoring was facilitated, even to a limited extent, there appeared to be a sense of progress and a desire to continue along a road of responsive progression.
- Certain peer mentors provided continuity. In September, 2003, there was at least one original peer mentor remaining in three of the IPETQ training sites. Two from the British Council setting were now actively peer mentoring each other. The International School retained one who had worked on the curriculum changes with me and who would have liked to be more active if she were given the chance.
- Facilitation of dynamic interaction evoked ready interest on the part of most committed teachers.
- This facilitation should be deliberate and organized and requires training.

### **Question 6. How do Peer – Mentoring trials affect the role of teachers in EFL institutions?**

When teachers take on the responsibilities of revitalising their teaching and their curricula, it is easy to see how they might come into conflict with a management that might be entrenched in traditional role expectations. In EFL and ESP settings, especially in culturally sensitive areas like the Middle East, there is often no structured curriculum in place and, in the

experience of both myself and many of my respondents, management take up the role of ‘non-responsive’ providers. This means they will use the easiest available curriculum and any movement to change the written curriculum or any attempt by teachers to reinterpret their role could be interpreted as a threat to their ‘locus of power’.

In actual fact there were no viable curricula in place in 1997 at the Naval School, in 1999 at the Joint Command, in 2000 at the Military College or in 2001 at the International School.

### **Naval School**

Although the Naval School had been a hub of peer mentoring activity from 1997-2000 and some reports had indicated collaboration in 2001 and in 2002 there had been a gradual movement away from dynamic interaction through curriculum building and peer observation. By February 2003 the role of the teachers was reduced to a passive acceptance of the demands of the company which were transmitted by the supervisor. Hence Dan could say in interview on Feb 26 2003:

*The atmosphere at the College is very subdued. We just do our teaching. We do not get together to build or revise curriculum and the only person who comes into my class is John, the supervisor, to carry out the annual appraisal.*

My diary reflects what I thought about this comment ( Feb 27 2003):

‘This is further evidence that unless there is informed facilitation of peer mentoring, positive sharing of skills does not occur.’

### **Military College**

In this centre the role that teachers undertook from 2000 to 2001 had not been passive. The role of the teacher at the Military College had been multi-faceted. Peer mentors were observing each other, when possible, from 2000 to 2001, were creating and revising curricula, building exam banks, collaboratively planning and executing lessons, meeting with each other for forward planning and reflexively adapting to all the changing



circumstances that are listed in the Settings in Chapter One of this dissertation.

However, as described on page 122, attitudes to collaboration had changed so much that by 2003 teachers played a very passive role at that centre. This led to a diary entry in Feb 2003:

‘It seems that, unless a committed facilitator is present in the centre, the instructors will accept a more passive role and simply go with the tide.’

## JCSC

On May 2 2003 the Supervisor of the JCSC in interview outlined how both he and his team were harassed over five years by ‘elements’ in the management even to the point where he states:

*‘They tried to remove me but because of my very good relations with the Colonel in charge of my site these people were told to keep their noses out.’*

Furthermore he points out that

*‘There was a clear element of jealousy that at our site peer-mentoring, collaborative and dynamic work was being carried out and really we did not need direction from the DOS especially since that direction appeared ill-founded and retrogressive in nature. Over five years 1998 – 2003 they have tried to remove core staff from me and replace them with their own men.’*

My notes following this interview (May 2, 2003) reflect my own insider researcher points of view coupled with other supervisors’ and teachers’ points of view.

‘The role of teachers reflects directly on leadership and control. With non-responsive management, peer-mentoring and dynamic collaboration within the teams take away from the control exercised by that kind of management. Over five years unlikely candidates have risen within the administration. Management also confuse administration with managing teachers. They confuse their own roles. Also the role of ‘learning teachers’ who are ‘leading,’ in a cooperative fashion, their own centres. is misinterpreted and feared.’

At the Joint Command and Staff College, teachers, to survive at that site, needed to be more than simply teachers. They needed to be or become authors, curriculum designers, test designers, human resources managers, computer operators, desk-top publishers and leaders of their own team apart from being highly responsive classroom teachers in difficult and unknown circumstances.

Steve could report in questionnaire in January 2001:

**We are all things to all men at this site. We need to be highly reflective and reflexive to be able to cope.**

Ray replied with similar sentiment in interview April 2003

*'Unless you quickly learn to adapt to all aspects of the job at Joint Command you will be seen to be not pulling your weight. Some teachers who have not responded have met disaster at the hands of our own very influential and critical students.'*

### **Qatar St.**

The Qatar Street site of the MINDEF contract inherited a curriculum called the American Language Course (ALC) which has already been commented upon in the section of this chapter dealing with research question four. It is American in content using even 'local' Texan -American vocabulary and idiom. More importantly it is, according to questionnaire response in April 2002 by Antony who taught at Qatar St 2001-2002:

**A quagmire of imposed grammar, syntax, and Texan idiom which does not allow for teachers or students to diversify, ask questions or interpret wider issues of how this curriculum matches the needs of Kuwaiti soldiers**

The teachers who accepted a submissive role and simply turned the page with the students every day and administered the test every two weeks, were able to survive. But even amongst those survivors I can detect from



interview and questionnaire that teaching at the site was demoralizing. Hence Pat could state in questionnaire in April 2003.

**I have been at this site for over two years now. It suits me. I do not have to think. I finish every day at 1.30 pm and I have no marking. But boy the material is drab for me and for the students.**

Others could not remain so passive. My notes for October 2002 observed that:

‘Two more teachers were dismissed from Qatar Street and from Kuwait in mysterious circumstances. Over five years there have been many such dismissals. Some instructors I personally knew to be questioning the whole approach to teaching and the ALC curriculum, others clashed with the UK management and yet others clashed with Kuwaiti officers working in conjunction with the apparently unresponsive UK management. For some reason or another the turn-over of teachers is high. Based on observation, the main cause is the totally ‘unresponsive’ ethos of that site’

My own diary reflections (20 April 2003) on the role of teachers were:

‘In most dynamic settings for EFL teaching it is highly desirable that the teachers see their role as more than that of passive teachers. They ought to be more like trouble - shooters ready to alter existing practice, adjust to any circumstances and to fix problems. They need to be computer literate and to not only know their language well but to be familiar with strategies that work for teaching it. Above all they ought, in my view, to be able to create and sustain dynamic professionalism.’

This new dynamic role for the international EFL teacher can create immediate tensions with a management that cannot or does not know how to adjust to new professional and leadership roles. The traditional, hierarchical approach to management has never expected inferiors to argue, make decisions or be critical in any way. A Qatar Street manager, in 1999, stated in response to questionnaire:

**All the teachers have to do is teach. The material is in place. This site is easy to work in.**

A different manager, overall Director of Studies but based at the same site. answering in questionnaire in February 2003 on how he might facilitate best use of teaching skills, indicated that not much had changed:

**All our teachers and supervisors at all the sites have clear instructions on how to proceed. Any problems are ironed out when I (the DOS) meet the supervisors on a weekly basis.**

Despite this apparent ease in running their centres the supervisors did not all meet with approval by their teachers. In an evaluation questionnaire issued by the ELS company in 1998 three out of five supervisors were not given more than 'satisfactory' by the teachers who worked under them. Two supervisors were (I had noted June 1998) 'appointees of the group that resided at the locus of power' and these had certain serious question marks raised in the evaluations. Those evaluation opportunities were not offered to the teachers again.

### **British Council**

Sanjula, at the Indian school, appeared to be growing into a new role. In interview, 2 May 2003, her intimations were as follows:

*'The head, though, is great. I have a great head teacher. She now wants me to coordinate in-service days and to try to help the others with new ways of teaching.'*

Anne, too, at the British Council's own teaching centre, adjusted to the new role of being a teacher who was listened to and valued for her opinions, sharing her knowledge and skills with others. In interview June 2003 she could say:

*Now I am happy. I feel I am doing something useful and am valued for it*

### **International School**

The passive role of certain teachers was exemplified at the International School where one teacher, Jane, is quoted in interview January 2003 as being:



*'Ready to keep my head down and simply take the money.'*

On 10 February 2003 my notes reveal more about this teacher:

'The teacher also intimated that she could manage her classes well. She took different classes in the art room – younger children, mixed boys and girls - and they enjoyed being there. It was obvious that other teachers were struggling with discipline with adolescent boys, many of whom were out of order. The intimation went further...that others, trying to change the curriculum and peer mentor to effect interesting classes, might be stepping outside of their role...that Jane was in a sense a role model because she had got by for three years by *keeping her head down*.'

#### Summary of meaning of results for Research Question Six

- Teachers themselves prefer either to be passive or actively inventive.
- Traditional hierarchical structures in a reactionary administration prefer the teacher to have a specified and perhaps simplistic role.
- Teachers who step outside of that role and take upon themselves 'all round' skills and question how they learn with others can easily be regarded as a threat by the hierarchy of the institution.
- The 'locus of power' can shift from those in positions of control who, perhaps quite naturally, seek status for themselves. It shifts when professional teachers and trainers take on dynamic peer-mentoring roles and can manage very well without interference from the above.
- Facilitation of team sharing appears necessary in certain EFL settings because of the many variables present and the expectations of students and their spokespeople. Such facilitation can also be a threat to accepted roles of managers or administrators.

## **Overview of Results of Research.**

The main points deriving from the results of this research and the responses to the six research questions presented through thick description, can be pinpointed by several key statements for each question. These key points could be called my emerging theories.

### **Continuous Learning**

Teachers and trainers continue to learn best when there is an ethos established at their institution of open - ended learning, sharing of skills and collaborative stances on curricula, teaching strategies and team interaction. Facilitators are required to keep up the momentum of continuous team learning.

### **Subject Knowledge**

First and Second language teachers of EFL/ESP can share their strengths to effect dynamic teams. Language teaching is highly compatible with continuous language learning and cultural sensitivity. Teachers of English or teachers who use English as a medium for teaching have different educational backgrounds. Some are strong at grammar and syntax, others fluent presenters, still others have excellent ESP knowledge. These factors suggest strong reasons for sharing skills.

### **Quality Of Teaching**

Just as there many different educational backgrounds amongst EFL teachers, so each one of them has a different teaching style and strategies for approaching students are numerous. To avoid hurtful comparisons between teachers, there needs to be a recognition of multi - faceted approaches and a sharing of what works and what does not with particular groups of students. A team that builds a curriculum together then teaches it have often inbuilt techniques and strategies applicable to that curriculum which are agreed on by all the team. ‘Ownership’ of the curriculum and the energy to try out a variety of techniques and strategies for putting it over to students are important for effective EFL teaching. Teachers can, usefully, co-plan, observe and feed back to each other to develop their teaching skills.



### **Curriculum Development and Building.**

Curriculum, in EFL settings, seems to be central to good teaching. Curriculum development brings the team together and curriculum revision and building affirms what works and what does not. The notion of a 'living curriculum' is central to dynamic interaction between teachers and means that students show interest and learn from a particular curriculum. A restrictive curriculum, prescriptive and limited, does not infuse either teachers or students with imagination and limits learning. Ongoing facilitation of a living curriculum is vital.

### **Responding to Change.**

Change requires a shift in cognition. One can simply react to change by not really going to the heart of the matter or one can be proactive and create teams which are permanently responsive. Reflective skills and reflexive abilities can be facilitated by creating a self-reliant team that can respond to any changing variables. Peer-mentoring creates the dynamism that accepts that change is inevitable and that allows teachers the reflexivity to deal with it. Those in positions to influence selection of teachers and ongoing professional development should be trained how to manage professionals and how to facilitate positive change.

### **The Role of Teachers.**

As teachers become more independent in their approach to what they teach and how they teach it, their roles change from passive acceptors to leaders and initiators. Some teachers wish to remain passive and, especially in the Middle East where there are no protective unions or teacher organisations, they feel safer playing non - threatening roles. Those that wish to take on more responsibility for their circumstances by creating dynamic teams to effect change can become a threat to the 'locus of power' which is historically the privilege of managers and higher administrators of schools and institutions.

These conclusions are discussed further in Chapter Five where I will evaluate outcomes of the research and suggest certain broad implications.

# Chapter 5

## **Discussion of outcomes and implications for further research**

The results of the research can be evaluated and discussed within three geographical areas of focus. These are:

- the local Kuwaiti centres where the research was carried out
- the regional countries of the Gulf and the Middle East
- the wider global English language teaching community

Furthermore, the implications of the research can be discussed within the framework of the three main conceptual areas which guided the contextual reading presented in Chapter Two, namely Mentoring, Professional Development and Teacher Response to Change.

This chapter also concerns itself with an assessment of how well the methodological approach worked, of the feasibility and potential impact of introducing peer mentoring and listing six main headings under which my suggestions for new and better practice are considered.

Finally I lay out some ideas to promote the introduction of peer mentoring in institutions around the world. In this way action research which has generated theory can be retranslated into action.

### **Evaluating the defining elements of the Kuwaiti centres.**

Those centres and institutions that appeared to be seeking some kind of collaborative peer mentoring interaction and where a degree of dialogic interaction took place were:

The Training Company for Kuwaiti MOD in three centres

- The Joint Command and Staff College
- The Military College
- The Naval College



The British Council, Kuwait

- The RSA CELTA Teacher Training course
- The routine courses offered to the general public in Kuwait.

Even within these centres peer mentoring took on different forms and it can be said that where I felt cooperation by teachers and trainee teachers was most pronounced was at two IPETQ MOD centres, The Joint Command and Services College and The Military College as well as during the British Council RSA Celta Course.

The centres which did not appear to attempt to create the correct ethos for peer mentoring of any sort, where the teachers reported low morale and a lack of empowerment were

- Qatar Street, in the MOD Training Organisation
- The International School.

These centres had opportunities to promote real learning and growth since they had discussed at Qatar St. some kind of mentoring system but did not, in reality, adopt it and the International School has had whole school curriculum intervention in order to secure international accreditation. Opportunities appear to have existed and there were isolated cases where teachers at these centres attempted to help each other, peer observe and make meaningful changes. It seemed, however, that management would not allow structured peer mentoring to happen.

The salient conclusions emerging from the centres where collaborative work and peer mentoring occurred are :

- The managers opened themselves to ideas from the teaching staff and actively encouraged collaboration and feedback
- The most common preliminary training course for EFL teachers, the RSA Celta, encouraged the trainees to plan together, observe each other and give feedback on lessons or parts of lessons

- The curriculum was either wholly invented by the teaching team or allowed for change and revision or encouraged the creation of extra materials to respond to unexpected needs
- Teachers opened themselves to learning from each other without the threat of being appraised by superiors who might mark them down for not 'toeing the line'
- Peer mentoring was facilitated either by someone trained in peer mentoring strategies and techniques or by someone who believed in collaborative team work and could create the environment within which it could succeed.

The main conclusions emerging from centres where, despite opportunities for real collaboration, there appeared to be no ethos of sharing skills are:

- The managers and the company's main directors seemed to remain resolutely hierarchical in approach and appeared to resent teacher input, particularly if this might suggest teacher empowerment
- There was no evident empowerment of teachers. They were told to simply 'toe the line.'
- Teachers and trainers appeared not to wish to step outside of simple guidelines as this may have meant more work and more responsibility for which they were not recompensed. Evidence points to a lack of proactive decision making within strong factions of the teaching staff and there appeared to be a lack of intrinsic motivation
- Curriculum was established and prescriptive and both managers and trainers did not apparently wish to change it. Moreover, management did not seem to take opportunities to create a teacher - inspired and student - centred curriculum since they did not seem to possess the concept of a living curriculum
- Centres and schools lacked facilitators, trained in the benefits of peer mentoring, who might encourage dynamic collaboration
- Change was, apparently, seen as dangerous
- Professional Development could be confused with Professional Education
- Mentoring, in general, was not understood or valued. Peer mentoring, in particular, was either not understood or interpreted to be another 'fad'.



### **The Middle East context evaluated**

The research, being action research, does not claim to have any real direct applications outside of the context in which it was carried out. The nature of the inside observer using the intervention of action research in a particular setting lends itself to localisation of findings. The peer mentoring trials were carried out in three settings within one country in the Middle East and I have been interested to view how types of collaboration affects the development and continued learning of teachers at those sites.

Other countries in the The Middle East, however, provide a similar cultural background to Kuwait where the actual research was carried out. The characteristics of most Arab societies include Muslem religious customs and Arabic language as well as a strong leaning toward teacher - controlled classrooms and an authoritarian approach to teaching. Native speakers of English with different ideas on classroom management and on learning, for example student - centred learning, can meet with opposition from reactionary Arab administrators and students who have always, in their previous training in Arabic schools, been trained in rote - learning techniques. Independent thinking is not, on the whole, encouraged and this may be reflected in the authoritarian regimes which are established in the Arabic Gulf and beyond into areas of North Africa and the Mediterranean.

For this reason and given that I have, in Chapter Three (Cf. p.73), argued for *naturalistic generalization* which would allow for the results of the Kuwait enquiry to be, at least in part, transferable to other similar situations in the Middle East, there is a case for comparison and utilisation of results in this area. There are a number of specific similarities I can point to. They are :

- many countries in the Middle East have similar training institutions and schools
- the Gulf Cooperation Council promotes cooperation within economic and educational fields in the Gulf region which is mainly supported by economies based on oil
- all countries share an Arabic tradition, culture and language



- in the Gulf region there are tribal links between countries and the system of government through emirs (princes) and ruling families is generally accepted
- favoured trading partners are UK and USA and many international schools and training institutions are fashioned on UK or USA models.

These common factors suggest that the Gulf, in particular, is an area where results might naturally apply, even though I recognize that each training institution has its own sub - culture and that any transferable conclusions from this research would need to be introduced and explained, perhaps via the TESOL and TEFL conferences which attract many educators from around the Gulf and which are held in and around Dubai and Abu Dhabi each year. Moreover, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Sudan and parts of North Africa share the attitude towards language and culture and indeed many of these nations have sent teachers to Kuwait to teach in the Arabic schools. Some are teachers of English and I have observed that they do follow a rather authoritative stance as to the teacher's role vis a vis students and in relation to colleagues. I and many of my respondents have worked with these teachers of English in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and readily acknowledge their insight into the Arab learner's mind. I have remarked, however, that just as my results from the International School indicate, there is a shared respect by Kuwaiti and other Arab teachers for a teacher's *sole authority* in the classroom which usually, in my observation, has amounted to a fear of collaboration or of having one's pedagogical knowledge or teaching strategies checked. Throughout the Arabic culture there is a strong respect for hierarchical and strict control within institutions which does not easily lend itself to a respect for notions such as the empowerment of teachers or whole school representation or the idea of teachers as leaders.

### **The importance of this research for the wider educational world**

There is, however, a broader international perspective since many of the teacher respondents in this research have taught or worked in other capacities in different parts of the world. Their experience and some of their skills had been honed outside of these settings. I was observing the sum of



*experiences learned mostly outside of my immediate context but applied here.*

Also the choice of settings, albeit settings I either worked in myself or had a working relationship with, reflect the three main types of institution wherein one would expect to find provision for English Language training throughout the world. These are:

- A Training Institution
- The British Council
- An International School

In this way the settings *mirror* the type of institution found anywhere in the world; my respondents here have worked in such institutions in countries such as Japan, Korea, China, Africa and South America, Australasia, North America and the British Isles. Hence the localised action research has a bearing upon a wider audience of trainers and teachers who are likely to team up with others of international experience.

In the rationale for this research, globalisation of English Language teaching was given as one reason why we have, in fact, so much diversity in the human resources available within the settings here in the Middle East and is one reason why a new type of EFL /ESP teacher is becoming more predominant in the Middle East.

However, it is important to note that any global dimensions mentioned in the research stem purely from the phenomenon that English has, particularly over the last twenty years, become the lingua franca of international communication. The change in job markets in the western world and the death of the idea of the job for life, the shrinking of the world through fast travel and through access to information and ideas via the internet, have all opened up the world to a new type of professional educator and learner.

Importantly for the academic nature of my research, I have made no attempt to link any political or economic globalising forces with this research.

Although these forces do co - exist with the spread of English language teaching, matters of economic, political or even micro - political interest, have been shown, especially in the international school setting, to have often clashed with a positive and ethical approach to creating a sound learning environment.

Globalisation of English Language, like globalisation of economies or political thought, however, is a contentious idea. There are those that think that globalisation of English Language will create backlash. Two modern linguistics specialists have written specifically about the global future of English. Crystal (1997) observes ‘that the need for intelligibility and the need for identity often pull people-and countries- in different directions’ (Crystal 1997 p.117) and fears a fragmentation of English into many, mutually incomprehensible, varieties. His other fear also surfaces: ‘if it (English) is the only language left to be learned it will have been the greatest intellectual disaster that the planet has ever known’ (Crystal 1997 pp.139-40). Graddol (1997), however, talks of the impact of satellite television and other anglophonic products. Whereas he might be expected to deliver a warning of envelopment of the world with a homogenous product – English - he actually suggests that ‘it will create greater linguistic and cultural diversity and be more supportive of local languages than previously supposed’(Graddol 1997 p.46). Later he goes on to add: ‘As computer usage spreads, it is predicted that English content on the Internet may fall to 40% of the total material’ (Graddol 1997 p.47).

This research, however, based on observation of how teachers and trainers from many different educational backgrounds and cultures interact, has identified that through peer mentoring (through sharing strategies, ideas and specific skills to improve each others professional development) international teachers become more sensitive to the cultures they work in and native speakers of English share with and learn from non native locals.

Hake (2000) reviews studies which explore implications that ‘focus upon questions of space, place and identity as core problematics’ (Hake 2000.



p.283). Furthermore, ‘the analysis explores the impact of globalisation upon the breakdown of traditional locations and identities, the *diasporisation* of space and the crossing of borders between multiple places, and pedagogical practices as potential maps to support individuals seeking to relocate themselves and rebuild identities’ (Hake 2000. p.283).

There is clearly a chance that the spread of English Language both as a language of ordinary communication and as a vehicle for culture and specific technical and professional development, could be seen as a neo-colonising influence. At the heart of this research there has been an awareness that the international nature of the training and the international stamp of the EFL /ESP trainer or educator plays a large role in determining whether effective collaboration and effective learning can take place. The kind of cooperation I have witnessed happening is non-threatening and provides peer mentoring with an ethical context. It is a method of professional development that respects the local environment and the knowledge of local teachers. It promotes a consultative stance between providers of English worldwide and their clients worldwide. It suggests that the travelling teacher takes away as much as he or she gives to a situation. In this way my research intimates that cooperation between both native speaking teachers (NS) and non- native speaking teachers (NNS) is essential for future effective teaching in a global EFL environment. Such cooperation is in line with the sharing encouraged in Chapter 4 (Cf: p 145).

Sifakis and Sougari (2003) discuss the burning issues behind the expansion of English as a global language. Their concern is rooted around the notion of ‘English as an international language and the question of ownership of such a language.’ (Sifakis and Sougari 2003 p.59). These authors look to the future and speculate about the status of the native speaker compared to the non – native speaker. They suggest ‘the need for raising learners’ intercultural awareness as a means of safeguarding against the more dangerous effects of English as a global language.’ (Sifakis and Sougari 2003 p.59.). Then they make reference to English as a ‘hegemonic language’ in so far as many native speakers of English learn no other



language and ‘often culturally isolate themselves’ (Sifakis and Sougari p.63).

Ferguson and Donno (2003) discuss the one month training courses (RSA Celta and others similar) and raise the question, highly relevant to this research, of the special restrictions that non - native speakers feel as they respond to the lectures and new practice: ‘questions, for example, concerning the position of the native speaker in EFL teaching, the place of explicit knowledge about language.....and the most appropriate modalities for initial EFL teacher training.’ (Ferguson and Donno 2003 p.27)

Although the article acknowledges that the one month RSA Celta course and others like it are: ‘no longer seen as a preparation in itself for teaching, so much as an initial step along the road of professional development’ (Ferguson and Donno 2003 p.27), it does highlight the rise in importance of the non - native speaker who will be facing the brunt of the teaching of English in large areas of the world. They point to two interesting developments. One is the strong position of the native speaker who decides to learn to teach the language, the other is the better understanding of the strong points of the non - native teacher: ‘In recent years the once privileged position of the native speaker in EFL has been assaulted ideologically..... Some writers have perceived a form of cultural imperialism at work in the structural privileging of native speaker teachers in the profession.’ (Ferguson and Donno 2003 p.28). I would have to agree with the article in the following intimation which they gather from recent research: ‘pedagogically too, some writers have argued that non-native teachers, far from being disadvantaged, may be better placed to understand the problems of the learner’ (Ferguson and Donno 2003 p.29).

The authors question whether the RSA Celta is not underplaying professionalism in so far as it is a very brief course demanding only the bare minimum of subject knowledge. However they stress that there is no single way of teaching which can be called the effective method: ‘We live in the post - method age’ state Ferguson and Donno (2003 p.29) and they stress



that there is no consensus for any one method. Those teachers who responded to my research by criticizing teachers who for example did not follow a strong grammatical approach to teaching English or those teachers and supervisors who advocated the test – driven ALC course at IPETQ did appear to advocate the one method approach. Yet, the strongest impression I received from all centres of research was that those who were adamant that a particular approach was the best were those who were slow to contribute to a collaborative stance toward curriculum development and pedagogical change.

Recent research on western - based TESOL teacher training programmes indicate that ‘nearly 40% of teacher trainees enrolled in North American, British and Australian TESOL programmes are Non Native Speakers (NNS). However, many of these programmes have not adequately recognized and addressed the different needs and interests of their NNS teacher trainees in certain key areas’ (Carrier, 2003 p.242). One of these areas is competing with native English language teachers and another concerns ‘encouraging contributions by NNS teacher trainees to the field of English language teaching’ (Carrier 2003 p.242) which the author suggests could be enhanced by the introduction of a first semester course which might address these issues and introduce ‘contextually responsive teacher education content.’ (Carrier 2003 p.242). Such input would assist those teachers who return to their respective countries after course completion.

Carrier’s (2003) insights coincide with some of my own findings in that ‘Many NNS teacher trainees are earlier trained in educational systems where note taking, memorization and limited classroom interaction are the established norm’ (Carrier 2003 p.245). My own findings at the International School point to the lack of reflective thinking by Arab teachers who have been educated through rote learning in highly authoritarian schools and colleges in countries where, socially and politically, authority is not to be questioned (Cf: p 150).



Consistent with the interventionist approach of action research I welcome the way Carrier (2003) offers constructive ideas for new training courses for a mix of native and non-native speaking teacher trainees. He suggests, for example, 'peer review of writing.....when they benefit from their different linguistic repertoires' (Carrier 2003 p.245). The British Council course, though brief, could have included such interactive elements but instead seemed to highlight those who could use English fluently and those who couldn't (Cf: p.113 of this dissertation). Despite this, it became apparent during the course that certain native speakers were visibly not confident in their knowledge of how their own language could be broken down into syntactical or grammatical elements and were not confident in skills for teaching the language. Because the non-native speakers had already learned English as a Second Language they already knew some of the difficult areas in learning English and had already employed strategies for learning the language themselves. The sharing of these ideas with the native speakers could have led to better strategies in the classroom and the sharing of the idiomatic use of language by the native speakers could have created a learning opportunity.

I noticed, however, that although feedback was encouraged by peer observers on the RSA course there was a great deal of competitive pride at play and even linguistic snobbery on the part of native speakers and indeed on the part of non-natives who, for one reason or the other spoke the language better than other non – natives.

My observations on the RSA Celta course, which include one of my main findings that open dialogic learning was curtailed by the rather monologic way the course was conducted, (Cf: Chapter 4 p. 87), lead me to agree with Carrier (2003)'s recommendations for teacher training within EFL: 'By constructing groups that include both NS and NNS teacher trainees, rotating the role assignments within the groups (eg. recorder, checker, timekeeper) and carefully observing each group's functioning, teacher educators can provide opportunities for NNS and NS teacher trainees to support and learn from one another' (Carrier 2003 p.247).



The University of Pennsylvania encouraged contributions by the NNS teacher trainees on its EFL/ESPcourse, *Penn Language for Specific Purposes*. It encouraged these students to give oral presentations on articles, book reviews and topical papers relevant to their course. Their lessons were, if they chose, videotaped and peer reviewed. This kind of peer collaboration and participation in reviewing current research publications involves students in the cutting edge of discussion on areas of interest within language teaching. One of my findings in this research has been that the facilitator of peer mentoring would be an action researcher. If EFL teachers, particularly NNS trainees, are encouraged to participate in ongoing and topical debates they will be more open to facilitation of peer mentoring and may more quickly become facilitators themselves.

### **Evaluation of the qualitative approach to the research**

The qualitative approach; particularly guided by the reflexive practice innate within ethnographic studies has proved to be effective in this kind of study where a varied number of professionals were asked to respond to mentoring initiatives, to questionnaires and to interview questions.

The human factor, particularly the day to day response of teachers to their daily practice, is difficult to present in quantitative studies. Only under very special circumstances could the trainers and teachers begin to think in terms of numbers. For example, when they were asked to report on a monthly basis it was thought that some teachers could note down the frequency of incidences when they conferred. This research tool was not much utilized by respondents in earlier months but, after approaching respondents and re-explaining what exactly I needed, I received some of those incidence reports. They proved useful to highlight the main areas where teachers perceive their collaboration occurs. However the collection and analysis of this raw data can be affected by the time and energy that teachers have to sit down and report incidences. These will vary from site to site just as the teaching programme varies within single sites. Thus the analysis of any

such data is only useful in so far as it *underlines the qualitative* analysis of a particular process that is taking place.

In the questionnaires I have particularly found it useful to leave certain questions open – ended, as precise or closed questions are often too pointed so that teachers may feel they have to commit themselves to a position which may be against the company or school. Respondents suggested that they preferred some freedom in response as no two experiences are the same; no two days of teaching are the same. I also discovered that the questionnaire was a good base for moving into interview. I tried to personally collect the completed questionnaires and, whilst doing so, to discuss some of the wider issues arising from the responses.

Inductive analysis is required for ongoing assessment of this research, since, as Woods (1999 p.6) indicates: ‘it is possible to tell an impressionistic tale within a realist context.’ In fact, as long ago as the 1960s, writers like Berger (1966) could point out that social reality has ‘many layers of meaning’ (Berger 1966 p.34). The evidence needs to be looked at from different angles and from different value positions. I can list several different value positions which needed to be accounted for when I was reporting, for example, on the MOD Training Organisation.

These value positions were held by

- The Military School of Languages – Direction and Management
- The Colonels in charge of the four main centers
- The Training Organisation’s upper management
- The supervisors at each site
- The trainers at each site – and each trainer within a site
- The students at each site
- The facilitator of peer mentoring/ the researcher

Hence within one training institution, because the different *players* have different aims, we can conclude that there are many ways of judging what is best practice: what is good training and what is not. The qualitative stance



allows us to interpret continuously a process of training from different points of view. Thick description is especially suited to this. Denzin (1989) sums up what qualitative research attempts to do: 'It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, emotion and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self – feelings. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions and meanings of interacting individuals are heard' (Denzin 1989 p.83).

### **Evaluation of findings in relation to the literature**

The literature searches have discovered three main categories of reading which might be relevant to this enquiry. They match the three main conceptual areas outlined in Chapter Two. These are:

- Mentoring
- Professional Development
- Collaboration as a strategy for responding to Change

#### **Mentoring**

Although most literature on professional development of teachers and on change within teaching environments have specific relevance to all of my settings, the reading on mentoring seems to fall into two categories; that of traditional mentoring, whereby novices or juniors are mentored by more experienced professionals and that of collaborative mentoring or peer mentoring (sometimes called peer coaching in the United States).

The first category seems to outline the development of mentoring in schools and discusses the successes and pitfalls of mentoring today. This body of literature I have found helpful as a historical and background setting within which to develop arguments towards the more dynamic peer mentoring which is the subject of my research.

The second body of literature is much smaller. Despite quite wide searches, in most cases the *peer mentoring* nomenclature is found only in relation to students helping other students, often in the lower years of University

training, or in relation to mature well experienced teachers assisting trainees or novices. This I would approximate more to traditional mentoring. There have, however, been accounts of teachers mentoring each other in schools in Australia and in Leeds, UK and some other areas of the world. These accounts, though rare, always point to considerable learning and cognitive transition on the part of the teachers concerned. (Cf: p.53)

Threlfall and Smith (2000), in their account of what happens in a TTA experiment in Leeds (Cf: p. 45) note that if Heads of Year or Heads wished to get involved in the peer mentoring then they had to open up their teaching strategies to observation and feedback. In this way the fear of one - way observation by hierarchical, possibly judgmental elements, is removed. The senior teachers would also need to sharpen up their skills now that they might be challenged to open up their practice in the classroom to critique. Many teachers and trainers within research in Kuwait expressed a certain resentment at being evaluated by supervisors or training managers whose own skills were never open to examination.

### **Professional Development**

One central problem connected with the professional development of teachers who responded to this research is discussed by Swain et al (2003): 'Education systems are heavily centralized and bureaucratic and there is a physical and conceptual separation between administration and instruction. Instructional supervision is limited and ineffective and the administrative staff are often unqualified and untrained.' (Swain et al 2003 p.71)

A practical example of how Continuous Professional Education can be ineffective, as long as the system itself does not change, is offered by these authors when they recount how a sample of eighteen Egyptian teachers who had been on the overseas programmes to Britain were interviewed. Their responses are encapsulated in this statement by the researchers: 'they now knew of the differences between Egypt and the United Kingdom, but were bemused by how they might implement what they had experienced in the United Kingdom in untransformed classrooms on their return to Egypt. The



resources available are still the same. Headteachers and advisory staff show little time or enthusiasm for new ideas' (Swain et al 2003 p.67). My own experience of working with Egyptian and other Arab teachers is that they are not only imbued with a rote - learning system but that they also have few expectations from an authoritarian and reactionary educational management system.

One of the most important aspects of peer mentoring is its interactivity through two - way or group feedback. The way that feedback could be interpreted negatively at the British Council RSA Celta course, (Cf. p. 87 ) highlighted the dangers of peer critique. Martin and Rippon (2003) attempt to examine an induction scheme for new teachers by more experienced members of staff. They emphasise the use of personal intelligence, particularly aspects of intelligence such as self - awareness and empathy, for successful feedback. Both probationers and supporters need training, they suggest, but they warn of the dangers of relying on purely technique: 'However the danger is that technique can become the main preoccupation with those who would wish to handle feedback more effectively....while technique is important, an understanding of the importance of self awareness and empathy is much more influential in the success or failure of feedback. This view was stressed repeatedly by participants in the study.' The authors also refer to the need for training for the appraisal process. Referring to intrapersonal and interpersonal training for appraisal Martin and Rippon (2003 p.158) qualify 'the appraisal process as a complex area for which training is essential. The weight given to formative and summative assessment procedures in the Teacher Induction Scheme makes this kind of training an imperative.' Further they bring in an interactive mentoring relationship as a possible basis for making decisions within appraisal: 'These decisions should be the result of an intelligent mentoring relationship. This is a professional development process, rather than an administrative procedure' (Martin and Rippon 2003 p. 158).

Such a reliance on personal skills permeates the results of my research. The techniques of co-analysis of lesson plan, peer observation and peer feedback



all require sensitivity to the other person's methods and preferences especially if one of the peer mentors is a supervisor of teaching as I was at the Military College or as my principal was at the International School. As I reveal, on page 105, I personally felt the 'mentoring' pressure of an Arabic headmistress who, although well meaning, came from a different register of teaching and education and whose role as an administrator seemed to come first. At the Naval School and the Military College I had to carefully cultivate a new role of facilitator and critical friend rather than that of supervisor who could be responsible for instructors retaining or losing their jobs.

My research points to the difficulties I have in accepting the kind of linear progression from novice teacher to expert such as Berliner(1994) describes. Results of peer mentoring trials indicate that teachers at all stages of development and with varying experience have something to offer to the collective expertise. Discussing the elements innate within effective teacher development Sprinthall et al (1996) go further: ' There is no neat linear equation from theory to practice nor the other way from practice to theory. Is theory embedded in practice and is practice visible in theory?' (Sprintall et al 1996 p.667) and again: 'Certainly, theory, no matter how carefully stated, will have little utility for teacher development if the connections to performance cannot be determined' (Sprintall et al 1996. p667).

These researchers identify the *Craft Model* as 'pedagogical learner knowledge based on the dailiness of experience from the classroom. Such classroom savvy, also referred to as 'crafty knowledge' represents the accumulated wisdom from teachers and or practice-oriented researchers' (Sprintall et al. 1996 p 669). The operative word in a peer mentoring context is *accumulated*. The *Expert Model*, they add, gives 'little consideration, if any, to a change in teacher cognition or the cognitive developmental dispositions of the teachers in training.' (Sprintall et al. 1996 p.683).



It is cognitive development of learners which is inherent in Vygotsky's (1978) conclusions which stress the importance of social interaction, such as discussions and dialogue in small groups, as the primary method of producing cognitive – structural growth in the learner. Cognitive development is also inherent in Schon's (1987) advocacy of the reflective practitioner.

My research has found that not all teachers are motivated intrinsically to adapt to change in cognition and that changes in cognition have to be carefully nurtured and should be at the heart of institutional change. My own findings are rationalized by a strong emphasis in research literature on change in cognition (Cf p53). Peer mentoring provides a practical opportunity to achieve such cognitive shift through collaborative work.

Phillips and Glickman (1991), discussing a peer coaching initiative for teachers which they observed over some time, sum up my aspirations for peer mentoring as a developmental tool: 'the peer coaching program gave teachers the opportunity to come together in collegial groups, assume more complex roles, reflect together in their work and take an important step toward lasting professional growth' (Phillips and Glickman 1991. p.25).

### **Change**

Gaynor (1997) offers a translation of Gaius Petronius' insights into change in AD 66: 'We trained hard .....but it seemed, every time we were beginning to be formed up into teams we were reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any situation by reorganizing, and what a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization' (Gaius Petronius AD66 cited in Gaynor 1977 p.28). Such an insight could constitute an analogy for what has been happening in education and training worldwide and more specifically within my research where change, at management level occurred, such as the takeover of the training company by IPETQ from ELS mentioned in the introductory chapter of this dissertation (Cf: p.1) or the curricular change at the international school where new directions were



taken without apparently involving the teachers in meaningful exchange of ideas on their practice.

Fullan (2001) points out certain factors contributing to the failure of planning. These are:

- It is hyperrational...with emphasis on 'what should be changed' instead of on 'how to work through a process of change' plus 'educational change is a process of coming to grips with the multiple realities of people, who are the main participants in implementing change'. (Fullan 2001 p.96). This research has continuously been involved with a process of change and I have already noted, (Cf.p.159), in one organization where peer mentoring was being initiated on a trial basis in Kuwait, there were many value laden positions taken up by the various players.
- It fails to take local context and culture into account.
- It is 'seductive and incomplete' (Fullan 2001 p 96)
- 'Innovators who are unable to alter their realities of change through exchange with would-be implementers can be as authoritarian as the staunchest defenders of the status quo' (Fullan 2001 p.97).

My research has noted how individuals, despite responding well to peer mentoring and open to reflective practice, took up a stance against the instructor at the Military College who preferred to act upon his own understanding of teaching and curriculum change. (Cf: page 110 ). I was very aware that all points of views should be heard, for as Fullan (2001) points out 'one ignores their stance at one's peril if they are around for implementation' (Fullan 2001 p.99). Maurer (1996 p.49) strengthens the argument for listening to all viewpoints: 'Often those who resist have something important to tell us...They may understand problems about the minutiae of implementation that we never see from our lofty perch.'

In answer to the complex problems posed in implementing change such as those found at the Military College and at the International School (Cf: p.6 and p.13), Fullan (2001) suggests that, although we may not be able to change all those situations we would like to, perhaps we can have an effect



on certain ones. He notes that we might usefully ‘assume that conflict and disagreement are not only in evidence but are fundamental to successful change’, (Fullan 2001 p.108), and that innovation is a process of ‘development in use’ (Fullan 2001 p.108). Further, he suggests that we ‘assume that changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda, not implementing single innovations’ (Fullan 2001 p.109). My findings in all three settings lean toward such institutional change as a pre –requirement for dynamic change and such results are supported by Senge et al.(2000) who advocate that all people with a stake in a school recognize their common stake in the future of the school system and the things they can learn from each other’ (Senge et al 2000 p.5). Finally, in my consideration of the concept of change, I can say that my results point to the same solution that Fullan (2001) arrives at when faced with chaos or complexity theories which is a move toward ‘developing learning organizations’ (Fullan 2001 p.103).

### **Use of Internet for Peer Mentoring**

As I have indicated in Chapter Four (Cf p.96), exciting avenues for peer mentoring exist within the internet world wide web. Some of my respondents used ideas for lessons posted on websites, including lesson plans, and also built up banks of resources from different sources. Almost all of the respondents browsed the web and looked for jobs in the international market through the internet, often making judgments about the job after reading peer reports by teachers who knew the job, the area and the country. Eastment (2003) provides useful information on free resources available to teachers of English, such as the BBC’s *Learning English* which has a rich vocabulary section and *Bized* which, as the name suggests, deals with business English (with over three thousand links) and provides several online simulations eg. Running a Farm and Managing the British Economy. These latter provide question banks (with answers), printable worksheets and interactive activities. This kind of material could be excellent in the hands of a flexible teacher who can adapt to particular settings.



There is also a joint venture by the British Council and the BBC, called *Teaching English*, which unites the best of the BBC's *Learning English* and the British Council's *Learn English*. Word games and multi media interaction create a wealth of ideas for the teacher and seek to be enjoyable activities for the learners. Added to this type of resource there are articles from well- respected teacher trainers and even 'the best set of lesson plans on the net' (Eastment 2003, p.319).

### **Possible Future Applications of Research.**

The main suggestions for future practice that arise out the evaluation of my research are presented under the following headings.

- Management of EFL/ESP/ ELI institutions
- Dialogic Learning and Intrinsic Motivation
- Native Speaker and Non- native speaker teacher cooperation
- Responding to Globalisation of the English language
- Training EFL Facilitators
- Internet as a peer mentoring tool.

Before I enlarge upon each of the above headings I add a note upon the feasibility and impact of peer mentoring schemes, guided by both the most interesting recent research findings from my own research and from other authors.

My research has clearly indicated that, from observation through action research intervention and from feedback from the teachers who choose to try out peer mentoring, the process is a dynamic interaction that bears fruit for those who keep the practice up. Even those, within my research, who thought it an unnecessary imposition intimated that it demanded focused work on the part of pairs and teams, although some considered that they practiced something like peer mentoring informally during coffee breaks. From my results I deduct that many do not appear to understand the dynamic character of peer mentoring which pervades curriculum, planning, classroom strategies, office interaction, teacher professional development and the management of teaching. Others do not wish to rock the boat or



---

involve themselves in change, mainly, in my considered view, because they, like Gaius Petronius, (Cf p.164) think change is for the sake of change. Management fear such a dynamic and empowering process. It questions their authority and possibly their aptitude for managing people.

Hence, from all these observations, I conclude that sustained peer mentoring requires a change of cognition which should begin at the top and permeate its way down through the teaching institution. To start the process going, however, I believe that it is plausible that managers who are open to constructive change would welcome a well - constructed intervention in their institution, whereby a facilitator, versed and experienced in peer mentoring or collaborative techniques in training, would try to prove the effectiveness of focused cooperation by English language teachers. Hence, I discuss, at the end of this chapter, a strategy for encouraging facilitation of peer mentoring in international schools and in training institutions. The impact of such facilitation could lead to real change within organizations and would, I am sure, involve some conflict. The response and the change would require monitoring and might well be the subject of further action research on peer mentoring. Many questions are left begging, however, which concern the management of teachers, teacher training, teacher learning, the training of the facilitators of peer mentoring and the possible uses of internet technology.

The following conclusions arise out of discussion and findings in Chapters Three and Four and from insights discussed earlier in this chapter.

MANAGEMENT could be encouraged to view business as a longer - term enterprise that requires growth from within and sees the empowerment of its teachers as empowering the whole institution. Managers of education might profitably be drawn from those who have preferably a wide experience of teaching and are suitably qualified to lead other professionals. Their professional qualifications should be of an order that allows them to be sensitive to other professionals and to lead by example, showing interest in their own development and in the professional development of those they



manage. Management ought to be aware of all the value positions relevant to their training or teaching environment (an example relevant to this research is given on page 159 of this chapter). Peer mentoring will ease the load of management and it is a process that is applicable to all managers as well as classroom teachers. If they expect to appraise other professionals they should expect to have their own practice appraised.

LEARNING is something that all committed teachers already expect to do throughout their teaching careers. Monologic thinking (single – minded thinking with only one outcome) might well be replaced by dialogic thinking. (Cf Chapter Two p.30) The new facilitators of teacher training (both initial and ongoing) might logically promote such thinking since it will provide schools and institutions with more flexible and responsive teachers. Good peer mentors would be flexible and open to all viewpoints but would also be intrinsically, as opposed to extrinsically, motivated.

NATIVE SPEAKING AND NON – NATIVE SPEAKING teachers of English should cooperate and work collaboratively to learn from each other both on initial training courses and as part of their ongoing professional development. (Cf: page 158) In this way the non – native speakers do not feel disadvantaged and can share their insights into local cultures and into experience of learning English as a second language, just as the native speakers can share their idiomatic knowledge of the language. Both NS and NNS teachers could cooperate on research projects in peer mentoring. In this way the teaching of English throughout the world becomes a synergistic process.

GLOBALISATION of the English language involves the dangers of neo - colonialist and cultural imperialism. (Cf: page 155) International bodies such as the British Council might take note of the concerns of local teachers and education boards. Peer mentoring implies an openness to sharing skills and a cultural sensitivity and in this way reduces tensions which could arise. Teachers should be encouraged to learn the language of the country they are



working in and to take from it, culturally and linguistically, as much as they give.

PEER MENTORS need to be trained and encouraged to keep their teaching dynamic. My research has illustrated that, unless an interested facilitator can keep the impetus of peer mentoring going, even actively collaborating teachers can easily slip back into the easiest option or convince themselves that it was useful for a short time but is not practical in the long term. It is essential that self - motivating and intrinsically -powered facilitators are recruited by English teaching institutions around the world. My suggestion is that such facilitators be action researchers or those who have spent time in action research related to collaborative techniques in teaching (Cf: p.45 for an example from Leeds, UK). Preferably they should also be classroom practitioners with a reduced timetable so they can visit others and have time to discuss issues with other practitioners and inspire dynamic interaction in the school or institution. A senior peer mentoring facilitator could advisedly be a senior member of the management team and inspire confidence upward through the hierarchy of management as much as, laterally, to teaching colleagues.

INTERNET PEER MENTORING leads to recommendations for the future of this popular and useful tool. My suggestion is that there should be some kind of international central clearing house on the world wide web whereby English teachers do not have to randomly search for suitable sites and which would encourage feedback on materials and lesson plans used with perhaps a star rating for appropriateness in certain cultures or situations. Already some universities have centres dedicated to encouraging international research through creating clearing houses for communications on particular areas of interest. The Oxford Internet Institute is one example of such centralization of research writings.

## **Implications for further research**

Since the nomenclature ‘Peer Mentoring’ is comparatively new and what I mean by peer mentoring is, although not complicated, certainly complex and difficult to fully effect, I would advocate further research in peer – mentoring within University Education departments and Teacher Training institutions . Such research could be carried out as a form of action research by trainee teachers. Furthermore, teacher training carried out within schools, for example the school -based QTS programme in Britain, could be a vehicle for longer term trials in the effectiveness of peer mentoring. Moreover, although my research has concentrated upon peer mentoring for teachers of English and that remains my central area of focus, there is no reason why, in the interest of pedagogical training in general, teachers of other subjects should not benefit from such close collaboration with their colleagues.

At present, however, mentoring in Britain America, Australia and Canada is seen as best carried out by a senior teacher or head of department who then assesses the mentee. My research would advocate a new kind of mentor who would either volunteer to peer mentor a colleague or who would be invited to assist in the mentoring of a new member of staff by collaborating with that teacher or trainee in a non - threatening and constructive manner. Future research might examine the viability of such an approach.

Furthermore it is the research itself, as I have personally discovered, that best teaches a practitioner the effectiveness and the limitations of peer mentoring. I would therefore advocate that ‘senior facilitators’ of peer mentoring, perhaps attached to a local education authority or attached to a group of private institutions, be appointed not only because of their interest in good classroom practice but also as a result of the topicality of their research. Such ‘senior facilitators’ could encourage, guide and help to select other peer mentors.



In conclusion, it will be a very positive step if EFL peer mentors and indeed teachers of other subjects who are sensitive to individual settings, who can communicate well with their fellow educators and who believe in dynamic collaborative practice, continue to research their practice. Senior facilitators, experienced in action research, could continue to motivate these peer mentors and become partners in research with them. They might also encourage some of those peer mentors to take up facilitation as a full time career. In this way a cycle of good collaborative practice, informed by findings from ongoing action research, can be generated.

# References

Ackland, R. (1991). 'A Review of the Peer Coaching Literature' in *Journal of Staff Development*, 12,22-26.

Alred, G and Garvey,B (2000) 'Learning to Produce Knowledge: the Contribution of Mentoring' in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 8 no.3 pp 261-272

Altrichter, H., Posch, P. and Somekh, B. (1993), 'Teachers Investigate their work: an introduction to the methods of action research.' American Management Association, New York

Berger, A. (1966) Effectiveness of four methods of Increasing Reading Rate, Comprehension and Flexibility. ED013718 (Online) Available: [www.askerica.org](http://www.askerica.org) Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> September 2002

Berliner, D. (1987) 'Ways of thinking about students and classrooms by more and less experienced teachers' in Calderhead, J.(ed) *Exploring Teachers' Thinking*,: Cassell London

Berliner, D. (1994) 'Teacher Expertise' in *Mentoring in Secondary Schools, A Professional Development Programme* (Reader4) Open University , Milton Keynes.

Bird, M. (1992) 'Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methods; a case study of the implementation of the Open College policy' in Brannen, J (ed) *Mixing Methods qualitative and quantitative research*, pp127-43., Avebury/Ashgate Publishing Ltd. Aldershot

Bird, M., Hammersley, M., Gomm,R., and Woods,P.(1996) *E835 ModuleNotes: Educational Research in Action* Open University. Milton Keynes



Bokeno, R. and Gantt, V (2000). 'Dialogic Mentoring'; in *Management Communication Quarterly*, Nov Vol. 14 Issue 2, pp 237-270

Breidenstein, A (2002) 'Researching Teaching, Researching Self' in *Clearing House*, Jul /Aug Vol 75, Issue 6 <http://web19.epnet.com> Online : accessed 11/10/02

Bridges, D.(1995) 'School-based teacher education' in Kerry, T. and Shelton Mayes, A., (Eds) *Issues in Mentoring*. OU / Routledge, London.

Burgess, R.G. (1985) 'Some Ethical Problems of Research in a Comprehensive School' in *Field Methods in the Study of Education*', Falmer Press. London

Carrier, K (2003) 'NNS Teacher Trainees in Western based TESOL Programs' in *ELT Journal* Vol 57 / 3 July 2003 pp 242-250

Cohen L and Manion L (1994) *Research Methods in Education* (Fourth Edition) Routledge, London and New York.

Corey, S.M. (1953) 'Action Research to Improve School Practices.' Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

Crystal, D. (1997) *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge University Press

Denzin, N.K. (1989) *Interpretive Interactionism* London, Sage.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) 'Entering the Field of Qualitative Research' in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.: Sage. London

Easterby – Smith, M., Thorpe,R and Lowe,A (1991) ‘The Philosophy of Research Design’ in Bennet,N, Glatter,R And Levacic, R. (Eds) *Improving Educational Management through research and consultancy*. Paul Chapman / OU. London.

Eastment, D. (2003) ‘Free Resources’ in *ELT Journal*, vol. 57/1 January 2003.pp 318-320

Eisner, E. (1992) ‘Objectivity in Educational Research’ in *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 22 no. 1, pp. 9-15, Basil Blackwell, Cambridge, Mass.

Elliot B, and Calderhead J (1995) “Mentoring for Teacher Development: Possibilities and Caveats” in Kerry, T and Shelton Mayes, A (Ed). *Issues in Mentoring* (1995) Routledge. London.

Eraut, M. (1994) *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*. The Falmer Press. London

Everston, C. M., and Smithey,M.W. (2000) ‘Mentoring Effects on Proteges’ Classroom Practice’ in *Journal of Educational Research*, May/JuneVol. 93 Issue 5, pp 294 -304

Ferguson, G. and Donno, S. (2003) ‘One Month Teacher Training Courses: Time for a change?’ In *ELT Journal*; v57 no1. pp 26-33

Fletcher, S (1997) ‘From Mentor to Mentored’ in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 5 No.1 pp 48-55

Fullan M (1999) *Change Forces. The Sequel* Falmer, London and Philadelphia

Fullan M (2001) *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (Third Edition) Routledge, Falmer, London



Fung, Y (2000) 'A constructivist strategy for developing teachers for change: A HongKong perspective' in *Journal of In-Service Education* Vol 26 no.1 pp 153-167

Furlong, V.J. Hirst, P.H. Pocklington, K and Miles, S (1988) *Initial Teacher Training and the Role of the School* Buckingham OU Press.

Garvey, B (1999) 'Mentoring and the Changing Paradigm' in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 7 no.1 pp 41-54

Gaynor, A. (1997) 'A Study of Change in Educational Organizations' in Cunningham (Ed), *Educational Administration*. M'Cutchan.  
Berkely, C.A:

Gerdes, D., and Conn, J, (2001) 'A user-friendly look at qualitative research methods' in *Physical Educator*, Early Winter , Vol 58, Issue 4: pp 183-190

Gitlin, M., Siegel, M. and Boru, K. (1993) 'The Politics of Method: from Leftist Ethnography to Education Research' in Hammersley, M. (Ed) *Educational Research: Current Issues*. Paul Chapman, London

Glaser, D.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine. New York

Gough, S. and Scot, W. (2000) 'Exploring the Purposes of Qualitative Data Coding' in *Educational Studies: insights from recent research in educational studies*. September 2000, vol. 26, Issue 3 pp 339-353

Graddol, D. (1997) *The Future of English..* The British Council London

Greenfield, T.B. (1973) 'Organizations as social inventions: rethinking assumptions about change' in Bush, T. (ed) *Managing Education: Theory and Practice* OU Press, Milton Keynes.

Hake , B.(2000) 'Lifelong and Continuing Education' in *Studies in the Education of Adults*, Oct.2000, Vol. 32 Issue 2. pp 282-285

Hamilton, D (2002) 'Noisy, fallible and biased though it may be (on the vagaries of educational research)' in *British Journal of Educational Studies* Vol.50 no.1 pp 144-164

Hammersley, M (1993) 'On the Teacher as Researcher' in Hammersley,M. (Ed) *Educational Research: current Issues*. Paul Chapman. London

Hammersley, M and Atkinson, P, (1995) *Ethnography; Principles in Practice* (Second Edition) Routledge, London

Harris, D,L. and Anthony, H,.M. (2001) 'Collegiality and its role in teacher development: perspectives from veteran and novice teachers' in *Teacher Development: an international journal of teachers' professional development*.Vol 5 no.3 pp 371-389

Holden, G (2002) 'Toward a Learning Community: the role of mentoring in teacher –led school improvement' in *Journal of In-Service Education* Vol 28 no.1 pp 9-21

Holly, P. (1994) 'Striving for congruence: the properties of a learning system' in Bayne-Jardine, C. and Holly, P. (Eds) *Developing Quality Schools*,: Falmer Press. London

Hoyle, E. (1972) 'Creativity in the School.' Unpublished paper given at *OECD workshops on the Creativity of the School*, at Estoril, Portugal.



Jarvis, P. (1994) 'Learning practical knowledge', in Kydd, L. Crawford M. and Riches, C. (Eds) *Professional development for educational management* OU Press. Milton Keynes.

Keedy, J., Winter, P., Gordon, S. and Newton, R.M. (2001) 'An assessment of School Councils, Collegial groups and Professional Development as Teacher empowerment strategies,' in *Journal of in-Service Education*, vol.27. no.1. pp 29-49

Kelly, M., Beck, T. and ApThomas, J. (1995) 'Mentoring as a staff development activity' in Kerry T And Shelton Mayes, A (Eds). *Issues in Mentoring* Routledge. London.

Kemmis, S (1993) 'Action Research' in Hammersley, M (Ed) *Educational Research: current issues*. Open University/Paul Chapman. London

Kerry, T. and Shelton Mayes, A., (1995) (eds) *Issues in Mentoring* OU / Routledge, London

Koeppen, K. and McKay, JW. (2000) 'Who is Telemachus ? Long- term Mentoring in Education.' in *Teacher Development: an international journal of teachers' professional development*. Vol 4 no.3 pp 411-423

Kohler, F.W., and Crilley, K. M. (1997) 'Effects of Peer Coaching on Teachers and Student Outcomes' in *Journal of Educational Research*, Mar/Apr. 97, Vol. 90 Issue 4, pp 240 -251

Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential Learning*. Prentice Hall. Englewood Cliffs, N.J

Lang, D (1999) 'A new theory of leadership. *Realwert* versus apparent good' in *Educational Management and Administration* 27 No2 pp177-8

Lawler, E. (1992) *The Ultimate Advantage: Creating the High Involvement Organization*, San Francisco, JOSSEY-BASS CA:.

Lee, J.C (2000) 'Teacher Receptivity to Curriculum Change in the Implementation Stage: the case of environmental education in Hong Kong' in *Journal of Curriculum Studies* Vol.32 no.1 pp 95-115

Lewin, K. (1952) 'Group Decision and Social Change' in G.E. Swanson, T.M. Newcomb and E.L. Hartley (Eds), *Readings in Social Psychology*, Holt. New York.

Lomax, P. (1994) 'Action Research for Managing Change' in Bennett, N. Glatter, R and Levacic, R. (Eds) *Improving Educational Management through Research and Consultancy*. Paul Chapman, The Open University. Milton Keynes

Lucas, K. (2001) 'The Social Construction of Mentoring Roles' in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 9 no.1 pp 23-48

MacGilchrist, B., Myers, K and Reed, J (1997) *The Intelligent School*. Paul Chapman, London

Marshall, E. (1995) *Transforming the Way We Work; the Power of the Collaborative Workplace*. American Management Association, New York.

Martin, M and Rippon, J (2003) 'Teacher Induction: Personal Intelligence and the Mentoring relationship' in *Journal of in Service Education*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2003, pp141-161.

Maslow, A. (1970) *Motivation and Personality*. Harper and Row. New York

Maurer, R. (1996) *Beyond the wall of resistance*. Bard Books. Austin Tx



Maynard, T (2000) 'Learning to teach or learning to manage mentors? Experiences of school-based teacher training' in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 8 no.1 pp17-30

Maynard, T. and Furlong, J. (1995) 'Learning to teach and models of mentoring', in Kerry, T. and Shelton Mayes, A. (Eds) *Issues in Mentoring*. Routledge London

Miller, C and Packham, G (1999) 'Peer-assisted Student Support at the University of Glamorgan: innovating the learning process?' in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 7 no.1 pp 81-94

Mitchell, H (1999) 'Group Mentoring: does it work?' in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 7 No 2 pp 113-120

Mullen, C, Stover, L and Corley, B (2001) 'School Accreditation and Teacher Empowerment: an Alabama case.' in *Teacher Development: an international journal of teachers' professional development*. Vol 5 no.1 pp 101-117

OU PGCE (1994) *Mentoring in Secondary Schools. A Professional Development Programme*. Readings 2 and 4. OU Milton Keynes

Perry, C (2000) 'Mentoring as partnerships in collaboration: one school's story of professional development' in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 8 no.3 pp 241-250

Phillips, D.C. (1993) 'Subjectivity and Objectivity: an objective inquiry' in Hammersley, M. (Ed), *Educational Research: Current Issues*. Paul Chapman, London.

Phillips, M D and Glickman, C. D.(1991). 'Peer Coaching: A Developmental Approach to Enhancing Teacher Thinking.' in *Journal of Staff Development*; vol 12 no.2 pp 20-25.

Phillips – Jones, L. (1982) *Mentors and Proteges.*: Arbor House New York

Roberts, A (2000) ‘Mentoring revisited: a phenomenological reading of the literature’ in *Mentoring and Tutoring* Vol 8 no.2 pp 145-170

Rogers, C. (1967) *On Becoming a Person*. Constable. London

Sachs, J (1999) ‘Using Teacher Research as a Basis for Professional Renewal’ in *Journal of In-Service Education* Vol 25 no 1 pp 39-53

Schon, D (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* Jossey – Bass, Inc. California

Senge, P, (1990) *The Fifth Discipline; the art and practice of the learning organization* Doubleday. New York.

Senge, P., Cambron – McCabe, Lucas,T., Smith,B.,Dutton,J and Kleiner,A (2000) *Schools that learn*. Doubleday. New York

Sifakis, N,C. and Sougari, A,M. (2003) ‘Facing the Globalisation Challenge in the Realm of English Language Teaching’ in *Language and Education: An International Journal*, vol. 17: 1. pp 59-71

Sprinthall, N.A., Reiman, A.J. and Thies – Sprinthall, L. (1996) ‘Teacher Professional Development’ in Sikula, J (Ed) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. MacMillan Library Reference (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) New York

Stake, R.E. (1978) ‘The Case-study Method in Social Enquiry’ in *Educational Researcher*, 7: (2) pp 5-8

Stenhouse, L (1995) ‘The teacher as Researcher’ in *E835 Offprints* Open University. Milton Keynes



Swain et al (2003) 'The Overseas In – Service Egyptian Teacher Education Programme: distal and proximal reflections on policy and change', in *Journal of in – Service Education*, vol. 29, no. 1 pp. 61-80

Taylor, E., Beck, J. and Ainsworth, E. (2001) 'Publishing qualitative adult education research: A peer review perspective' in *Studies in the Education of Adults* Vol 33 Issue 2 pp.163-180

Threlfall, J and Smith,L (2001) 'A sense of Progress' in *RESEARCH PDT*  
Online: At [www. Education.leeds.ac.uk/devt/research](http://www.Education.leeds.ac.uk/devt/research). Accessed Nov 2001

Timperley, H and Robinson, V (2001) 'Achieving School Improvement through Challenging and Changing Teachers' Schema' in *Journal of Educational Change* Vol 2 (4) pp. 281-300

Toulmin, S. (1982) 'The construal of reality; criticism in modern and post modern science' in W.J.T. Mitchell (Ed) *The Politics of Interpretation*, University of Chicago Press

Varghese, M (2002) 'Reconsidering the Novice/Expert dichotomy in the K-12 Mentor- Mentee relationship' in *Journal of In-Service Education* Vol 28 no 1 pp 23-33

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge Mass

West Burnham, J & O'Sullivan (1998) *Leadership and Professional Development in Schools. How to promote techniques for Effective Professional Learning*. Financial Times. Pitman Publishing. London

Wood, E and Millichamp, P. (2000) ' Changing the Learning Ethos in School' in *Journal of In-Service Education* Vol 26 no. 3 pp 499-515

Woods, P. (1999) *Successful Writing for Qualitative Researchers*. Routledge, London and New York



# Appendix 1A

## Questionnaire for Supervisors on possible introduction of a mentoring system for induction.

The Centre Director has asked me to report on certain experiments in mentoring which were conducted at the Naval School between March and July 1998. We experimented with co-analysis and collaborative teaching strategies. Would you please help by completing this simple questionnaire? Please add explanatory comments where necessary.

1. Do you think the present system of induction of new teachers is

poor                      adequate                      good                      very good

2. Do you think the system set up for observation of teachers is

poor                      adequate                      good                      very good

3. Do you think we adequately utilize the teaching expertise we have in the ELS/MOD contract?

4. Would you welcome a mentoring system whereby Supervisors and other experienced teachers would mentor new teachers?

Thank you for your input.

Sean Toner. Supervisor. Naval School.

# Appendix 1B

## Questionnaire / DOS / Supervisors

Dear Colleague,

I would be grateful if you could help my present research by putting down your ideas on how teachers and supervisors collaborate at your centre/s.

Thanks in anticipation

Sean V. Toner

1. Do teachers, together or with supervisors, collaborate on lesson planning?  
Please comment

2. Do teachers at your centre collaborate in the teaching of lessons? Please comment.

3. Do teachers, together or with supervisors, collaborate in curriculum development, provision of extra materials or interpretation of curriculum?  
Please comment.

Name:

Centre.



## Appendix 2

### Letter to MINDEF instructors requesting response to questionnaires.

Dear teacher/instructor,

As you know I have been carrying out research for nearly seven years now on how instructors, teachers and supervisors interact to effect a collaborative workplace within EFL /ESP institutions and schools where English provides the main medium for teaching.

I am interested in how EFL/ESP and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) teachers/instructors have been trained with respect to continuous teacher learning and how their experience and attitudes reflect on teamwork in the creation or revision of curriculum. Further I am interested in how they might share experience and resources, including transferable skills that teachers bring from other walks of life or from other situations. I would also like to assess the quality of feedback by peers on fellow teachers performance in the classroom. Last, but not least, I need to know if peer mentoring approaches affect the quality of student learning which is, I think you might agree, the main goal of training and education.

Some of you are new respondents and others have been good enough to respond to me before and I am interested in what progression, if any, may have gone on over the last year or so in your individual settings. My interests lie in the process of teacher learning, especially through peer mentoring, and how that might affect the quality of the 'product'.

Although much of the above is difficult to measure I think your comments on the daily opportunities to share knowledge, skills and teaching strategies would provide information which, in the qualitative tradition of research, open up insights into improving the teaching of English. I would be very grateful if you could jot down instances of sharing, peer observation and feedback, teamwork for curriculum change, use of transferable skills and how you think student learning may have been influenced by teamwork within your setting. If you have worked in different settings you may like to contrast or compare teacher and management attitudes to improving learning opportunities for both teachers and students.

Thank you for your support. Please keep the accompanying pro forma safe and hand back to me or to someone who can deliver it to me as soon as you have completed it.

Best regards

Sean Toner

## PEER MENTORING

## SHARING TO CREATE DYNAMIC TEAMS

1. Do you find that your centre facilitates collaborative work between teachers? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. Can you give specific instances or point to a process that you have been involved in, over the last year or so, where you have collaborated with your colleagues in planning lessons or the contents of lessons together?
3. Have you and / or colleagues been involved in developing new curriculum or revising/updating old curriculum? If so, how were individual skills used and sharing encouraged?



4. Have you and your colleagues been involved in any process of peer observation of classes and feedback ? How has this affected the quality of your teaching and the quality of student learning?
5. Can you point to instances where former knowledge, skills or experience, either your own or that of colleagues at your centre, has proved to be useful to your team/school?
6. To what extent does the management of your company/school facilitate a collaborative and learning environment in which teachers/instructors work and learn together. Does the management promote your professional development?

7. Have you used sites on the internet to borrow ideas for lessons which have been posted there? Do you think that this kind of distance/online sharing does or will enhance opportunities for teacher development?
8. How far do you think your own training for teaching fits you to international EFL /ESP teaching? Did your training emphasize continuous teacher learning, learning from one's peers or adaptability to change – all notions which might be regarded as important in a fast changing world with a great demand for English language training. Please comment and expand.



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Sean Vincent Toner

## **Appendix 3 A**

### **Questionnaire to Instructors on MINDEF Programme**

1. What is your position within MOD Teaching Programme Kuwait?
2. Which MOD centre do you work at?
3. What course/courses so you teach?
4. What type of student do you teach? Consider rank, age and ability level.
5. What type of work have you done in the past?
6. How long have you been in EFL/ESP teaching?
7. What EFL qualification did you acquire?
8. What other qualifications did you acquire?
9. How long have you been with MINDEF Kuwait?
10. Do you feel, in any way, that you are learning in your present job?



11. Do you feel that you have the opportunity to share experience and knowledge with your colleagues and supervisor? Are your particular expertise, skills and attitudes that you brought with you from another walk of life utilized to the benefit of the department / team? Expand

12. Do you believe in sharing skills, lifelong learning and reflecting on your practice or do you simply want to be left alone, get on with the job and not have too many questions asked? Expand

13. In your view, does the management facilitate your job and help with your professional growth. Expand.

14. Did your EFL training course adequately prepare you for teaching with the MOD in Kuwait? Expand.

15. Discuss below the main skills, subskills, attitudes and approaches that you personally have transferred from other walks of life to your EFL work. Some of these may be cross – over aptitudes ie. You are not sure that these skills / attitudes are not innate or have been developed partly since you became a teacher. In this case concentrate on whether they were important to your former job.

16. Do you believe a good teacher / manager should be a reflective practitioner ie he / she should constantly reflect on the curriculum he / she teaches / manages and on the strategies employed in putting it over to students? Discuss to expand.

Syllabus?

Curriculum?

Teaching Strategies?

Reflecting with mentors and peer mentors?

17. Any further comments



**Appendix 3B**  
**Modified Questionnaire to Teachers in IPETQ**

Name	Centre	Curriculum Area
		Date
Details of Collaborative work with colleagues		
What you have learnt from colleagues?		
Your own Input		
Did your sharing skills / knowledge lead to a change of direction		
EG. Reconsidered changing teaching strategies Considered use of different materials Provided new insights for curriculum development?		
Did you later reflect together on the effects of above insights on you classroom delivery / your input into creating materials etc?		
Any new directions after further reflection?		
Are you aware of any attitude / skill / subskill from you or your colleague (s) particular background / training that provided insight?		
Researchers notes.		

## **Appendix 3C**

### **Memorandum to IPETQ in connection with assistance.**

To: EFL/ESP Instructors

From: Sean Toner

Subject: Assistance with Project

Date: 10-3-01

Thanks for replying positively to my earlier request for assistance with my research.

I'd be very grateful if you could, over the next few weeks, write down notes on lessons, curriculum development and professional development, including any interesting adaptations and reflection you made in collaboration with colleagues. Would you keep in mind your own particular work background and those of colleagues that have worked with you in achieving a goal.

Just a quick reminder that my research attempts to centre on:

- Teamwork
- The collaborative workplace
- Transferral of skills / attitudes (perhaps learned outside of teaching)
- Notions of Learning. How teachers learn and continue to learn
- Peer Mentoring / Peer Coaching as a learning tool
- Strategies which produce a learning cycle. Planning a lesson with a colleague, executing this plan then reflecting on how it went. Possibly adapting future plans in the light of this reflection.

I provide you with a sheet on which you might find time to jot down ideas / reflections as they come to you.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Quantifiable Evidence

Please tick this weekly program of skills use and if possible add a short description. Room is supplied on another sheet for any developed argument. I am interested in how skills which you acquired in other walks of life may have assisted you to enhance lessons and also how you have been able to contribute to professional development of others.

Week \_\_\_\_\_

Skill Area	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
From the area of subject knowledge specifically learnt in former career					
Subskills eg. Tolerance. PR/ Negotiation Skills					
Skills Specific to development of curriculum or which add to the understanding of an established curriculum					
Skills acquired formerly affecting pedagogical knowledge					

# Appendix 5

**Notes on informal interview with instructors who have already responded to form re. instructor's reflections on collaborative work.**

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Present:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes on Lesson Planning

Notes on Curriculum Development

Notes on Observation / Peer Feedback

Notes on Collaboration on Testing



# Appendix 6

## A sample platoon of Officer Cadets.

412 students sat an initial English assessment gauged to assess general English language skills. The results given were a percentage out of 100. The recorded results showed a wide range of ability with the average being in the middle range of ability. The lowest recorded result was 16 and the highest recorded result was 95.

The students sat their initial assessment in July 2000 and since that time have received approximately three hours teaching per week. The students have since sat three progress tests. Two of these tests were designed to assess curriculum studied during the previous two months and a mid term test designed to assess overall syllabus studied so far.

The results of these tests have been recorded and the general trends which appear are as follows.

1. Six students have shown clear progress in the marks recorded with each test result showing a higher score than a previous one.
2. Nine students received test results which remained reasonably constant – within 5% either side of their initial test result.
3. The results of the remaining 29 students showed no clear trends. Their test results fluctuated significantly with the results being either very high or very low compared to the previous test and the initial assessment.
4. 28 of the students who sat the most recent test had a higher result than the initial assessment test and 12 students had a lower result than the initial assessment test. It is to be noted however that whilst this might suggest progress, the most recent test was not as comprehensive as the initial assessment test and so it is not possible to draw definite conclusions.

Heston Spencer  
Feb 2001

# Appendix 7

## Letter to RSA Celta Students requesting access to their training practicum.

Sean Toner  
Tel: 6667186  
Tel/Fax(h): 3717424  
Email: toner@eudoramail.com  
Date 03-01-01

Dear RSA Celta Student,

As you are embarking on a course which promises to be challenging and stimulating, whatever your background, I would like to wish you a useful learning experience over the next three months.

I am, like you, a student. I am doing a Doctorate in Education with the Open University, UK. My main interest lies in Peer Mentoring for continuous professional development of teachers of EFL and ESP. A particular focus of my study is how people who have been in other walks of life outside of teaching share skills, subskills and attitudes learnt outside of 'teaching'.

I am in no way involved with the teaching of this course. The British Council and Cambridge have been good enough to allow me to be a silent observer if you, the student agree to allow me to be present when you are interacting with other students. I cannot and will not act judgmentally. I cannot discuss with you anything about the course (until after the course is finished) and I will try to be as unobtrusive as possible.

If you would be interested in helping my research by allowing me to attend during planning / teaching / post-lesson feedback and / or discussion of curriculum, I would be personally most grateful if you could sign the form below and return it as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time,

Sean V. Toner

Name	
I allow Sean V. Toner to be a silent observer during my formal class presentations and during feedback sessions.	
Signed	Date



**Appendix 8**  
**Notebook**

Name	Location
Date	Time
Type of Interaction	
Comments from Teacher	
Comments by researcher	
Follow up action	

# Appendix 9

## Diary

Date	Time
Type of Interaction	
Researcher Reflections	
Follow up action / thoughts	



# Appendix 10

## RSA Celta Trainees

### Questionnaire on peer coaching during course at British Council.

May I congratulate you on completing the course. I hope it was a true learning experience for you.

If you are able to help me with my research, would you please fill in this form and return it back to me before Sunday. Fax 3717424. Email: [toner@eudoramail.com](mailto:toner@eudoramail.com)

Please answer completely and truthfully. Anonymity is preserved.

1. How valuable to you was the input from your fellow trainees during the course?

2. Were you aware of using your former experience (educational, vocational, cultural etc.) when you were co-planning or co-analyzing or feeding back to colleagues.

3. Were you aware of finding the experience of others useful for your progress on the course? (This could be collaborative interaction or one to one) Please expand.

4. Would you want to continue the same kind of close collaboration that you have recently had with your peers when you start teaching EFL? (for a short time / always) Please expand.

# Appendix 11

## Questionnaire for teachers and management at International School

Dear Colleague,  
I would be grateful if you could help my present research by putting down your ideas on how teachers and managers collaborate at your school.

Thanks in anticipation

Sean V. Toner

Name:	School
-------	--------

1. Do teachers, together or with managers, collaborate on the content of lessons? Please comment

2. Do teachers at your school collaborate in the teaching of lessons? Please comment.



3. Do teachers, together or with managers, collaborate in curriculum development, provision of extra materials or interpretation of curriculum? Please comment.

4. In your view, how have recent curriculum developments affected the provision of subject matter, student motivation and / or discipline in class.